

PHOTOPLAY PLOT ENCYCLOPEDIA

AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE IN PHOTO-
PLAYS OF THE
THIRTY-SIX DRAMATIC
SITUATIONS
AND THEIR SUBDIVISIONS.

CONTAINING A LIST OF ALL THE
FUNDAMENTAL DRAMATIC MATE-
RIAL TO BE FOUND IN HUMAN EX-
PERIENCE, INCLUDING THE SYNOPSES
OF ONE HUNDRED PRODUCED REP-
RESENTATIVE PHOTOPLAYS, WITH A
DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE SITUA-
TIONS USED IN EACH.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR
COMBINING SITUATIONS, FOR TEST-
ING THE STRENGTH AND NOVELTY
OF PLOTS, AND FOR BUILDING
PLOTS; AND AN INDEX REFERRING
TO EACH PRODUCER, AUTHOR, STAR,
STORY AND SITUATION MENTIONED
IN THE TEXT.

By FREDERICK PALMER

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PREFACE

It is the purpose of this work to supply the author, especially the photoplaywright, with a handbook of reference, which will be stimulating in its suggestiveness and at the same time a means whereby the novelty and the strength of a plot idea may be judged. By using the classification of fundamental dramatic situations formulated by Gozzi, Schiller, Goethe, De Nerval, and best of all by Georges Polti, to whom the present writers acknowledge their indebtedness, we are at once simplifying and widening the possible flights of imagination. And in going further, and into a virgin field, with the data accumulated by Polti, we hope to make more specific and useful the law he formulated.

Let us state the law in question here at the outset, that we may progress to its application and interpretation more readily. *There are only thirty-six fundamental dramatic situations, various facets of which form the basis of all human drama.*

Lest this seem dogmatic, it must be remembered that there is nothing arbitrary or cabalistic in the number thirty-six. As Polti says, the number might be smaller or greater, but thirty-six seems to be the most nearly accurate. Various writers on the subject have endeavored to discover a new situation to add to Polti's list, but all of their efforts have been feeble and ill-considered in comparison with his scholarly work. It is not the purpose of the present volume to add anything to the data rediscovered and formulated by M. Polti, but rather to carry that knowledge into a new field—that of the *Photoplay*—and to give the photoplaywright a comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the nature of each situation that has been used in photoplays, how it was used, whether it has been used to exhaustion in certain forms, whether it opens a new and interesting line of thought to the writer, etc. In this way the work will lead you into wide

vistas of the imagination, many of them untraveled by the writers of today, and will indicate the pitfalls that are everywhere awaiting the unwary author.

This work must be regarded as a work of reference. It is a stimulus rather than a formula, and at all times the writer must avoid seeking plot material ready-made for his use. Properly assimilated and understood, the work will help you to judge the worth of your own ideas, will suggest ways and methods of development, and will guard you against the danger of imitation and repetition. It cannot, nor can any other book, think for you.

It is true that all plots are combinations of situations, and that this work will deal with the fundamental situations in a comprehensive way and will indicate possible and worth-while combinations. But the student must not come to it hoping to find plots ready to use. The real work is left to the creative author, and only in the degree that you possess creative ability and dramatic imagination—the imagination, that is, that leads you to create dramatic characters and to place them in interesting conflicts with one another—can this work serve you.

PLAN OF STUDY.

1. In the following chapters, the factors other than Situation involved in writing photoplays are dealt with. This is an important part of the work, and should be carefully read before proceeding further. In these chapters you will be cautioned against the artificial manufacture of plots as mechanical combinations of situations. Theme and Characterization will be discussed, and methods of evolving plots will be touched on. In addition, a comprehensive explanation of Situations will be made. It is therefore important that you read with understanding every word in the introductory chapters before proceeding.

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2. In the subsequent chapters related and associated groups of Situations will be taken up individually, with reference to the forms and phases in which they have been used in photoplays. Examples will be cited of situations in photoplays recently produced, and suggestive comments upon the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness in their use will be made. In studying the situations and the examples of their use it will be well for the student to read slowly and carefully, for by the very nature of the work, a great deal of information is condensed into a brief space, though it is conveyed simply and directly.

3. The student should aim to familiarize himself in a general way with the contents, and then, after writing an original story, should determine just which situations he has used. By referring to

the comments upon those situations, the writer will readily recognize whether his story is hackneyed or novel, effective or ineffective.

4. Read slowly, intelligently, analytically, and you will find that your imagination will grasp the essentials of the problem of situation after one reading. Thereafter, continue your study and test everything you write in accordance with the plan suggested above.

Note: This work is not intended as a complete or comprehensive study of photoplay writing, but simply of the fundamental thirty-six dramatic situations and their use in the photoplay. This work is a reference supplement to the Palmer Handbook.

PART ONE

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CHAPTER I.

1. Throughout all human experience, and especially throughout all human drama, one meets constantly with the same fundamental situations, arising from the same fundamental emotional conflicts. In one sense a situation may be considered as the crisis or the apex of an emotional conflict. It has been discovered that there are, fundamentally, thirty-six human emotions, and the law of the thirty-six situations is an interesting corollary of this discovery.

2. The life of humanity in ancient Greece or in modern America, in the frozen reaches of the North or under tropic skies, is essentially the same. As far into the future as human imagination may travel, the emotional conflicts of human nature will be the same. For the slowest changing element in the universe is the nature of man. Human nature is the same the world over, and it is this fact that makes for the kinship and the fellowship of humanity. In the history of ancient Egypt and Babylon, in the epics of Homer, in the tragedies of Shakespeare, as well as in the work of contemporary writers, we find the same passions, the same loves, the same jealousies. Colored by environment and tradition, at bottom the story of Cinderella is the same as the story of a play now making a success on Broadway. It is this fundamental correlation of emotional experience that links us with the past, and makes real to us the emotions of mankind of centuries ago. The most poignant drama of history is that of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and yet we shall find, as we come to consider the stories of today, that the same concept of Self-sacrifice for an Ideal has been used inspiringly by the writer whose work we enjoy in our favorite theatre.

3. All fiction, including the photoplay, is a combination of certain selected situations, as we shall see clearly when we come to examine and analyze the examples of photoplays in the following pages. From

those examples we shall learn what situations have been used most frequently, and why, and what situations have been ignored. Such an analysis of the use of situations in the photoplay will suggest new combinations and new uses, and at the same time will offer a warning against the repetition of certain combinations that have been repeated in the same guise until they no longer entertain the spectator.

4. We read fiction and we go to the theatre, *first of all, to be entertained*. When we read a work on philosophy or science, it is for the specific purpose of acquiring knowledge in the most direct and simplest way. But fiction, created by Fancy, is the relaxation of the race. Because it is based upon the fundamental emotional conflicts of the race, and because it deals with human beings struggling against odds, it is inspiring to each of us in our daily lives. It is the privilege of the fictionist to entertain us, and incidentally to inspire us. And the photoplaywright, with an audience of countless millions, has the opportunity for inspiring the race to new hopes, new dreams, and a finer kind of life. First of all, the photoplaywright should learn to respect his wide audience, and to give them the best work of which he is capable. In order to appeal to so great an audience, one must base one's appeal upon the universal language of humanity—the *emotions*. And in writing for the screen one's knowledge of the innermost emotions of humanity, of the variations and subdivisions of the thirty-six basic situations, is more essential than in any other kind of writing.

5. *A thorough acquaintance with the thirty-six dramatic situations upon which all drama is based is requisite to the photoplaywright's success.*

WHAT IS A DRAMATIC SITUATION?

6. As explained above, a situation may be considered as the crisis or apex of an

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emotional conflict. In every conflict, there is the gradual development out of repose, the ascent to a crisis, and the fall to repose again. All human relationships describe such an emotional curve. *A situation occurs, in the course of dramatic action, when the characters are so brought together that their contrasts and conflicts are clear and dramatic, that the central character is placed in a dilemma in which he must make a choice, or in a predicament in which a change will be suffered, or is confronted with an obstacle to be overcome.* The manner in which the characters are brought together in such a crisis must be logical, natural and *seemingly inevitable*, if the situation is to produce the desired effect upon the spectator—that is, to arouse his curiosity as to the outcome, and to hold him in a state of suspense.

7. Elsewhere, a photoplay situation has been defined as a *Predicament*, and we shall come to see the truth of this definition when we turn to our definite examples.

8. In our examinations of the various phases of the thirty-six situations, we shall see that in some cases the crisis is clearly indicated by a simple statement, but that more often the crisis is implied in the statement of the principle of conflict. In both cases the reader will find suggestions for new variations of old ideas that will lead him to a more original line of thought.

WHAT IS A PHOTOPLAY SITUATION?

9. In the photoplay, the appeal is made directly to the mind and the heart of the spectator, by means of a clear pictorial presentation of a conflict. It is important, therefore, in considering photoplay situations, that we bear in mind the necessity for presenting *action* that is *pictorially* interesting and conflicts that are clear and striking in pictures. The success of the photoplay, as a form of popular entertainment, depends upon the directness and clarity of its appeal. When we take up the situations in order, we shall consider not only their dramatic but also their *screen* value. Since the emotional experiences of which they are manifestations

antedate the written word, it will be clear that many of the situations are more effective in a silent medium such as the screen than in written fiction.

10. A photoplay situation may therefore be defined as the crisis of an emotional conflict that can be clearly presented on the screen by means of pictures; in simpler terms, a *Predicament* which we understand when we see the actors on the screen.

The following is a clear example: the unexpected, but logical, entrance of a husband at the moment his wife is entertaining her lover. The sight of the three persons in their proper places on the screen is sufficient to make us understand the situation—and we are at once on the alert to learn what the husband will do, what the wife will do, and what the lover will do.

11. In considering a situation as a possible one for use in the photoplay, one should test it in this way. Will it be clear in pictured action? Will every member of the audience be moved by it? Or does it depend upon words, or is it vague and ill-defined? In one of Constance Talmadge's pictures, "A Virtuous Vamp," there was a very brief but delightful situation which serves as a clear example of what a *photoplay* situation should be. In that story, the heroine had lost several jobs with a large insurance company because her smile and her eyes worked havoc on the men. At length the young president of the company, who thought himself a woman-hater, made her his stenographer. One of his friends warned him about her, but he was sure of himself. A little later a notorious dancer wanted to have her shoulders insured, and the president asked the girl if she knew whether the "shimmy" was a dangerous dance. The girl demonstrated. Just then the president's friend entered. Not a word was necessary to explain the feelings of the characters, for it was all very clear in pictured action. It is interesting to note that the audience appreciated such a situation a great deal more than any of the clever titles or mere incidents that occurred. A situation, whether comedic or dramatic, causes a very definite and enjoyable emotional reaction in the spectator.

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THE COMBINATION OF SITUATIONS.

12. Neither of the brief situations we have mentioned can be considered as more than an episode when it appears alone, uncombined with others of equal or greater dramatic strength. Many inexperienced writers do very good work in the early part of a story, in presenting one or two slight predicaments that are of real interest, but fail to develop from these premises a really strong and well-rounded photoplay plot. The finished plot structure requires the combination of a number of dramatic and interesting situations; all plots are formed from such combinations.

13. As we go further into the subject, it will be seen that some of the situations are very well suited to the inception of a plot, but that they lack the strength that is required in a climax. If a writer starts a play effectively, but then allows it to become dull and lifeless and undramatic (as many beginners do), it indicates that he has been unable to combine situations. The most practical use of a work of reference of this kind becomes apparent in such a case. Having begun a story on a plane of dramatic interest, let us say that the writer is unable to find a situation which will logically follow the first, that he is "stumped" for further plot developments. By referring to the classified situations he will find all of the possible developments from that beginning, and will be able to make an intelligent and dramatic choice.

THE BACKBONE OF DRAMA.

14. Situations may be called the backbone of drama, for without them any fiction is spineless. This is especially true of the photoplay, for as we have explained before, the situation provides the most direct and poignant way to make an appeal to the spectator.

15. Masters of epigram like Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde can write amusing satirical plays, but most of their work fails to produce a genuinely dramatic effect. One leaves the theatre after such a play marvelling at the author's brilliance, but unmoved by any emotion. Only a few writers have succeeded in winning popularity in spite of violating dramatic principles, and even the best work of Shaw and Wilde will be found to conform to the age-old and invariable principles that are expressed in the following pages.

16. In order to make a real appeal to the emotions of an audience, the writer must place his characters in *Situations*. And to make such an appeal is the primary aim of the dramatist.

17. Without situations, fiction and drama will be a mere sequence of irrelevant incidents. In themselves such incidents may be of interest. They may be revelatory of character, or expressive of a significant theme. But unless they are coordinated upon a solid, firm foundation they will fall short of producing a *dramatic* appeal. *Every photoplay must have a spinal column of situation.*

18. Although the importance of situations in a photoplay cannot be over-estimated, it must be remembered that they merely form the backbone of the drama. It will not do, as some writers have imagined, simply to combine a few situations, and let the combination stand as a finished work. In addition, the rest of the organism must be supplied—the flesh, bone, blood and sinew that go to make up a complete, living reality. Without the backbone of situation, a drama is very deficient. But without the other important factors, it is no less unreal and artificial.

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CHAPTER II.

THEME.

1. *Not until we have writers who are concerned with Theme will we have truly satisfactory photoplays.* The theme of a photoplay is the underlying, unifying, basic idea. Without a theme, a photoplay will be an aimless story, having little real significance for the spectators. But with a strong, interesting, appealing theme, a story may have a tremendously impressive effect upon the spectator. In our consideration of examples we shall find one photoplay in which the central character goes out into the world to find the true God. The theme of that story—the quest for the true God—has been a fundamental concern of humanity for centuries. It is a significant and vital theme, forming the basis of most written philosophy. But in the photoplay, it was also developed into a splendid story. Without the co-ordinating, unifying theme, the action of the story would have been meaningless and unimportant. But the theme unified it, vitalized it, and made it significant.

2. One of the best examples of the use of theme is found in "The Miracle Man." In it we see the tremendous conflict between the spiritual and the material, which involves all the characters in its forward movement and underlies and unifies every element of the plot. Conflict is essential to all drama and drama built on a theme that has to do with the soul struggles of man is drama in its highest form.

3. Every situation in the following pages may be analyzed as the *dramatic* expression of a basic theme, and in addition many other themes, inspired by reading or observation, will suggest new combinations of situations. If the theme forms the basis of the writer's work, his use of situations will be logical, natural and inevitable. With an audience of mil-

lions the photoplaywright should pay especial attention to the selection of his themes. They should be chosen because of the universality of their appeal, because of their simplicity and significance.

CHARACTERIZATION.

4. Once you have selected a theme, the elements of conflict in a story will be fairly clear; but in order to interest an audience those conflicting elements must be represented by understandable, human beings, by living, breathing characters. Mere types will not suffice, for the characters of a photoplay must be *real* to win the sympathy of the spectator, or to arouse any other emotion. The out-and-out villain of the old-time melodrama is no longer interesting, except in burlesque, and the too-noble hero is likewise a person of the unreal past. Not only must the characters of a play express the conflict of the theme, but they must also be real human beings who win the audience by their reality.

5. Even the most frequently used situations can be given new life and color by good characterization, and in the creation of character the individual author has room for all the originality and skill he can command. In portraying characters for the screen their every action must be recorded. By the first action of a character upon entering a scene, the author should present him in a striking and novel manner to the spectator. In selecting material for characterization—names, habits, mannerisms, etc.—the author's knowledge of life and his power of observation will be revealed, as well as his ability to carry a definite line of thought—a *Theme* into its many ramifications.

6. Since every situation is the crisis of an emotional conflict, the necessity for drawing characters in evenly balanced con-

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flicts will be apparent. Given a certain theme, and having selected certain characters, there will come to mind the most effective situations to carry the conflict still further into definite, clear-cut dramatic action. The absurdity, for example, of drawing a light-hearted, rollicking, romantic central character and then placing him in a situation of Vengeance will be readily granted, for such a character would not feel the deep, concentrated desire for vengeance. Writers often make the error of creating an interesting character and then placing him in a plot so out of harmony with his personality that the total effect is ludicrous. Here, again, lies the value of *Theme*, for if the theme and characters harmonize, the situations selected to carry out the thematic conflict must of necessity be consistent.

7. The inconsistencies of characterization are at the root of the faults of most writers. Too often the photoplaywright has drawn a character from life and has then made him perform certain arbitrary actions, simply to bring about a smashing climax. But if the situations and the plot are not the logical, natural and *seemingly inevitable* product of the inter-relation of the characters, they will be artificial and unreal. In making every element of a story consistent and harmonious lies the author's opportunity to practice the art which conceals art. The moment the spectator is allowed a single reason to doubt

the reality of a character's action, the tension of the play is lost and the dramatic effect is gone.

8. But although the plot should be the natural result of the characters reacting one upon the other, it is equally ineffective to have the plot a mere natural sequence of incidents. Such incidents may reveal your characters, but if they do not advance the plot a step further towards the crisis, if they do not lead to a big situation, they will be of no dramatic value. Just as some writers have given too much thought to situation, to the detriment of their characters and themes, so have others concentrated entirely upon characters and have failed to tell a dramatic story. To provoke dramatic interest, there must be a *Plot*, and plot is dependent upon *Situation*.

9. In building your characters remember that to be convincing they must be true to life. Write of people you know for it is the people next door who are interesting.

Romance, tragedy, comedy surround you if you have the heart to find them, and the eyes to see them. As one of the masters of short story writing says: "There is a story in every house, a novel in every street and an epic in every town."

The great artist writes of life as he sees it, of people as he knows them, but below the surface of life and below the external semblance of people, he sees moving the great forces which make human life significant.

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CHAPTER III.

PLOT.

1. Plot interest is a blending of the expected with the unexpected. In the brief example cited before, in which we had the three characters—husband, wife, and lover—placed in a predicament, there was splendid opportunity for such a blending of the expected and the unexpected. In Lois Weber's production, "For Husbands Only," this situation formed the climax of the play. The audience knew that the husband would reach home while the other man was there, and the suspense was so well developed that no one knew what would happen. The plot, however, consisted of a great deal more than the situations forming its backbone. Every detail of action, down to the least important telephone conversation, was a carefully selected incident that definitely advanced the plot. The same theme underlay all the action, and the characters and the plot incidents were selected because they gave a clear and dramatic presentation of that theme.

2. Plot action is that quality of a photoplay which arouses and sustains the interest of the spectator, constantly exciting his curiosity, filling him with doubt, evoking his sympathies, and otherwise keeping his mind upon the problem of the play and upon everything that is done from moment to moment.

3. The simplest kind of a plot is that in which a character is placed in a predicament, kept there as long as suspense can be maintained, and then extricated in a surprising but logical way. But in addition to the bare predicament, the photoplaywright must provide interesting and logical reasons for the character getting into the predicament, logical causes for his inability to get out, and finally a logical, but unforeseen, escape. In a simple case of this kind, the central situation will often suggest the plot action that logically precedes and follows it, but the plot mate-

rial must be so carefully selected that it will not be obvious to the spectator. Unless you can hold the audience in suspense until the end of the story, you cannot produce a dramatic effect.

4. In the following pages we shall deal with concrete examples of Situations that have been so used as to produce suspense, to good or bad advantage.

THE PLOT OUTLINE OR "SPOT CONTINUITY."

5. After having selected a theme, visualized characters and worked out the general plot ideas, it is often a good plan to make a rough plot outline or "spot continuity." The simplest method is to put down the numbers from one to fifty, marking fifty "spots" or milestones, and to write a definite plot incident opposite each number. In a strong plot the sequence of events is logically from cause to effect, and the climax occurs as the natural and logical product of the preceding action. By incident, in this connection, we mean concrete dramatic *happenings* of vital importance to the plot as a whole, not merely incidental action of no plot importance. If the incidents are carefully selected, in accordance with the theme and characterization of the story, and are so organized that they approach a definite climax, they will usually form a clear and dramatic skeleton of the plot.

6. To illustrate just how the spot continuity should be constructed, and to indicate as well the logical sequence of incidents, let us consider a definite example. "The Golden Chance," produced by the Lasky Company, starring Wallace Reid and Cleo Ridgely, will excellently serve this purpose.

SPOT CONTINUITY OF "THE GOLDEN CHANCE."

By JEANIE MACPHERSON.

7. (1.) The heroine, unfortunately married to a cruel and drunken husband,

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secures a position as seamstress in a wealthy home.

(2.) In the wealthy home the master is trying to persuade the hero, a young Western millionaire, to make an investment.

(3.) The woman of wealth invites the hero to remain as their guest, promising to give a dinner and to invite the prettiest girl in New York.

(4.) The hero laughingly consents to remain.

(Note that these definite incidents are purely introductory and that they are all on the plane of repose. There is something of Situation VII, "Falling Prey to Cruelty and Misfortune," in the heroine's first predicament, but the plot has not yet begun to ascend towards its dramatic climax. Note also the characters that are established by these four simple incidents:—the unfortunate wife, the drunken husband, and the interesting hero, who wishes to meet the prettiest girl in New York. Without much further characterization, we know that something will happen with such a triad, and it is almost sure to be of dramatic interest.)

(5.) At the last moment, the prettiest girl in New York cannot come to the dinner, and the hostess, afraid to disappoint her guest, urges the heroine to pose as the girl for the evening.

(There is a slight element of chance in this incident, in the girl's inability to come to the dinner, but it is natural and convincing because of its relative unimportance and because it does not strain our credulity. Also, since it is the beginning of the story, the author is allowed certain liberty in establishing his premises.)

(6.) The heroine, who was once wealthy, consents to take the girl's place. (In this incident we have a partial example of Situation XXX, "Ambition," and it further serves to make even more clear our knowledge of the heroine and to establish suspense.)

(7.) The heroine, clad in evening gown and jewels, meets the hero, and their interest in one another is established.

(8.) The heroine, though charmed by her dinner companion, knows that no af-

fection can be allowed to develop between them because of her marriage, and puts him off lightly, only charming him the more by such tactics.

(Here again the element of suspense is brought in, and the preparation is made for the heroine's later predicament.)

(9.) At midnight the heroine slips away and goes home.

(10.) Back in her squalid slum tenement, her husband beats her and takes the money she has earned away from her.

(This involves another use of Situation VII, already noted, and also brings in Situation VIII, "Revolt," for there is that element in the heroine's comparison between her husband and the man she met the night before.)

(11.) The hero insists to his hostess that he meet the heroine again, and begs her to invite the "prettiest girl in New York" to another dinner.

(12.) The wealthy woman tries to evade the hero's insistent demands, but fails.

(13.) In desperation she again calls the heroine and begs her to continue the substitution over the week-end, at the end of which time the hero will return to the West.

(Observe the careful, logical motivation of each of these incidents and how one naturally, logically and almost inevitably grows from the preceding. First of all, the author took great pains to lay a strong foundation in her premise, and then every subsequent incident occupies its proper place.)

(14.) The heroine consents to continue the substitution, in order to avoid her husband and to earn the money.

(15.) The heroine tells her husband she is going to work in a laundry, and leaves the same day for the home of her hostess.

(16.) The hostess hires a new butler, one better qualified to superintend the elaborate preparations for the entertainment of the Western millionaire.

(17.) The butler, who has underworld associates, observes the diamonds worn by the heroine, and gossips to a friend.

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(18.) The butler's friend knows the drunken husband and tells him of the diamonds worn by the guest at a certain house.

(Note the thorough and convincing preparation for the meeting between the characters of the dramatic triad. What might have been a bald coincidence is here made plausible and real, by the careful attention to details. Note also the lifelike irony in the fact that the woman of the diamonds is the drunken husband's own wife. Such preparation postpones the climax as long as possible, and holds the spectators in suspense. Yet there is nothing non-essential in the foregoing incidents. Each event brings the action that much closer to the climax.)

(19.) The hero makes love to the heroine.

(20.) The heroine really responds, but realizes the impossibility of carrying on the deception, and seeks to evade the hero.

(Observe how the author is tightening the knots that bind the heroine, how she is making her suffer and conveying that suffering to the spectator, who knows all the circumstances of the case.)

(21.) The heroine, torn with emotion, runs from the hero and goes to her room.

(22.) The hero smiles after her and is confident that he can win her.

(23.) The drunken husband prepares for the burglary of the house where the diamonds are.

(24.) The husband effects an entrance into the house through a window.

(25.) The room he enters is that of his wife.

(But observe that in the production the husband does not immediately discover his wife. Instead the audience is held breathless in the tight grip of suspense, waiting for the next step.)

(26.) The husband picks up a silk stocking and grins salaciously.

(27.) He starts towards the bed.

(28.) He changes his mind and goes to the dressing table.

(29.) He gathers up the jewels, leisurely, critically.

(30.) Again he turns to the bed.

(31.) The wife awakens and stares, frightened, into the face of her leering husband.

(32.) The husband looks down at her and contemptuously says, "Some laundry."

(Note the maintained suspense in these incidents, and also the natural, quick way in which the author has relieved the tension with a comedic subtitle.)

(33.) The wife tries to take the jewels away from her husband.

(34.) They struggle together.

(35.) Sounds of awakening are heard throughout the house.

(36.) The burglar-husband senses danger and tries to escape.

(37.) The hero captures him.

(38.) The husband announces that he is merely calling upon his wife, pointing to her.

(39.) The wife sees the hero's look of dismay and tries to lie.

(40.) The husband accuses her, and she tearfully confesses that she is married to him.

(41.) The hero naturally interprets the relationship as a game to fleece him and scorns his host and hostess as well as the heroine.

(42.) The husband takes the heroine home.

(43.) The husband and his crook pal plan to fleece the hero by means of the badger game.

(44.) They force the heroine to write a letter, telling the hero that she is in terrible danger and asking him to come.

(45.) She takes advantage of an opportunity provided by the men's drinking to scrawl on the back of the letter, "Don't come!"

(In Incidents 40 and 41 we have a clear example of Situation XXXIII, "Erroneous Judgment," in the hero's misjudging of the heroine. Subsequently we have a logical sequence carrying the suspense still further, but incident 41 marks the beginning of the denouement, or untying, of the knots.)

(46.) The words, "Don't come," on the back of the note convince the hero that

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the heroine is straight and a victim of cruelty and misfortune. He therefore answers her summons, first telling his Japanese valet to call the police if he does not return within a few minutes.

(Situation II, "Deliverance"; Situation IX, "Daring Enterprise.")

(47.) When all of the characters are brought together the police answer the valet's call.

(48.) In the big fight that follows, the drunken, incompetent husband is killed.

(The death of the husband is logical and plausible in this case, because his drunkenness and incompetence have been emphasized throughout the story. We feel that he is incapable of even putting up a good fight and that he should be killed, as a perfectly natural result.)

(49.) The broken, tearful heroine is comforted by the hero, who at last understands.

(50.) The story ends with the happiness of the two.

8. In each of the fifty incidents something definite *happens*. There is action, and genuine dramatic action, with each new occurrence. We proceed directly to the goal we set for ourselves, the happiness of the hero and heroine, and every factor in the story is closely related to the central theme—that however great may be one's misfortunes, one will ultimately win out by courage, nobility and strength. As an example of unified action, in which every incident converges upon the development of the single plot, this story is especially valuable. It will be observed, as well, that the unities of time and place are also carefully preserved. Many writers, in dealing with a hero who came from the West, would introduce him in his home locale. But the author of "The Golden Chance" knew the value of elimination, and started the story with the incident that really sets the action in movement.

9. In "The Golden Chance" we find examples of the use of Situations VII,

XXX, XXXIII, II and IX, in a combination that is interesting, cumulative and dramatic in the extreme.

PLOT LOGIC.

10. In "The Golden Chance" plot logic is clearly indicated, but it is not to be supposed that the photoplaywright can select his fifty odd incidents and write them out without a great deal of consideration. The plot outline is especially useful because one can go over it many times, changing, eliminating, and adding wherever the plot steps are weak, vague, or illogical. Suppose, for example, that incident "5" did not suit the author. He might write it down tentatively, but he would place a mental question mark after it, and later on would endeavor to find a more suitable incident to accomplish the same dramatic effect. The plot outline is useful because it simplifies the process of analysis.

11. There is one way of testing the logic of plot incidents that deserves mention. That is to place the word "because" before each incident and to make each successive step in the plot definitely the result of what goes before. Thus:

12. *Because* the heroine is married to a drunken husband she secures a position as seamstress in a wealthy home.

13. *Because* she wishes to free herself from the squalid tenement life, and, therefore,

14. *Because* of her beauty and grace, she is asked to pose as a woman of wealth,

15. *Because* the hostess wishes to present the "prettiest girl in New York" to a young Western millionaire,

16. *Because* her husband is trying to interest the millionaire in an investment, etc., etc.

17. In this way, if the word is used correctly and legitimately, every plot incident will occur in a logical sequence of cause and effect.

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CHAPTER IV.

CREATIVE IMAGINATION.

1. *The trained photoplaywright is occupied much longer in selecting a theme, in gathering material, in creating characters, and in building plot, than in actual writing.* In other words, the creation of photoplays is a task of the imagination rather than of the typewriter. Good drama can not be dashed off like a letter, or even like a newspaper story. It must be *built*, step by step, brick by brick, scene by scene, until the completed dramatic structure possesses the finish, the solidity, and the beauty of a work of architecture.

DRAMATIC AND UNDRAMATIC.

2. The dramatic way of telling a story is that which makes the most direct and poignant appeal to the emotions of the audience. By the very nature of drama, a dramatic story is compressed, condensed and concentrated more than any other kind of fiction.

3. The photoplay should possess greater unity of time, place and action than any other work of fiction. A unified story is more likely to be dramatic than a rambling one, and the failure of most novels adapted to the screen lies in their lack of unity. They were not *dramatized*—that is, unified, intensified, concentrated. They consequently failed to make the direct emotional appeal that is necessary to the existence of drama.

4. On the other hand, many stage plays have also failed when adapted to the screen, not because they were undramatic originally, but because the usual stage play does not contain enough screenable action to occupy five reels of film and the adaptation therefore became padded with non-essentials, drawn-out, narrative in manner, and undramatic. The screen needs its own literature—a dramatic literature written for the screen by writers who appreciate and understand their new medium of expression.

5. Unity of action demands that all the incidents of a photoplay shall converge upon the development of a single plot, a central theme. This kind of unity is more essential than that of time and place, but in well-constructed plays they are usually concomitant with it. Unity of action is a quality of the short-story and the drama, but not necessarily of the novel or the tale. This, then, is another distinction between drama and narrative. While narrative is quite often dramatic and even melodramatic, drama should never be narrative in manner.

6. Many photoplays are criticized by the reviews because they are slow in getting started, because the first two reels are of no dramatic value, or because the interest lags after the first two reels. A careful study of the trade journals, in which the current reviews are published, indicates that these are the chief weaknesses of otherwise sound photoplays. A careful study of the dramatic situations will show that such weaknesses are due to a lack of knowledge on the part of the authors as to what constitutes *drama*. A sound knowledge of the thirty-six fundamental situations will safeguard the author against such weaknesses and will make it possible for him to judge the dramatic value of his plays.

THE TEST OF SITUATIONS.

7. If a situation is the best possible one that can be found to use in a given story, expressive of your theme and of the relations of your characters, its use is justifiable. But always the situation should spring from the theme and the characterization, at least so far as the finished product is concerned, for only in that way can the spectator be made to believe in the *inevitability* of your plot action. If, on the other hand, you allow a certain situa-

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tion to enter into your story without regard to the theme and characterization, the finished play will be artificial, lifeless and mechanical. The test of a photoplay situation is its harmony and suitability to the theme you wish to emphasize and to the characters you have made live.

8. After having studied the examples of situations that have been used in photoplays, you will also recognize that a second test is that of novelty. If your use of a situation is precisely like that of someone else, it will naturally not make a distinctive appeal to an editor. In this connection, it is well to remember that the novelty of a story often depends upon the new point of view the author takes towards his theme and the freshness and originality of his characterization.

9. We shall find in the following pages a number of examples of old plots vitalized and made human by insight into theme and characterization. No matter how often a situation has been used before, if you are positive that your theme is big enough and your characterization unusual enough to carry it to success, do

not hesitate to employ it, for it is treatment rather than the situation itself that distinguishes your finished product.

SUMMARY.

10. There are thirty-six fundamental dramatic situations, which form the backbone of all drama, and a knowledge of which is essential to a photoplaywright's success.

11. Let us now proceed to an investigation of the thirty-six situations and their use in photoplays.

12. Once again we would insist that the reader drop any idea of finding herein ready-made plots, or of attempting the artificial and mechanical combinations of situations that might form plots. Such methods will always prove ineffective and their products will be dull and uninteresting. Seek, instead, in the following pages, suggestions of value in your future work, study the pitfalls we point out, and use the list of situations and examples as a reference with which to test the strength or weakness of your own ideas.

PART TWO

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CHAPTER V.

FIRST SITUATION—SUPPLICATION.

In the first situation, the technical elements necessary are a Persecutor, a Suppliant, and a Power in authority, whose decision is uncertain. Any form of Supplication involving such elements may be considered as a subdivision of the situation. Some of its most interesting sub-divisions are:

A (1)—Fugitives Imploring the Powerful for Help Against Their Enemies.

This sub-division of the first situation has been used in many forms in the photoplay, especially as the inceptive situation of a play. It still offers splendid opportunities for development to the photoplaywright who can devise new variations. In the photoplay, its chief use has been in the favorite old romance of the maiden in distress, as the Suppliant; a guardian or parent as the Persecutor; and a brave hero who becomes the Power in authority. It bears a close relation to Situation II, "Deliverance," which is its usual development.

(2)—Assistance Implored for the Performance of a Pious Duty Which has Been Forbidden.

Obviously this sub-division was of more value in classic drama than in modern photoplays, for pious duties do not occupy the same position in the daily life of today that they did in former times. However, it offers food for thought, and it has been used partially in one or two Indian photoplays of the past, in which a character appeals to a power in authority for permission to bury his dead. Its treatment must be subtle in the photoplay, lest it produce an undesirable or morbid effect.

(3)—Appeals for a Refuge in Which to Die.

Again we have a sub-division requiring subtle treatment lest it appear morbid. Its chief use has been in the case of melodrama, in which a character—usually the villain—seeks a refuge from his pursuers.

B (1)—Hospitality Besought by the Shipwrecked.

(2)—Charity Entreated by Those Cast Off by Their Own People, Whom They Have Disgraced.

(3)—Expiation: The Seeking of Pardon, Healing or Deliverance.

The first of these three sub-divisions has its value in sea stories, and has been used in a number of such photoplays. The second bears a close relation to Situation XXVII, "The Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One," and has often been employed in combination with it. The third has been used chiefly in stories involving deathbed confessions, in which the villain appeals to those he has persecuted for pardon. Although that use has been sadly overdone, and is now exhausted, the same idea is worthy of new treatment.

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C (1)—Supplication of the Powerful for Those Dear to the Supplicant.

(2)—Supplication to a Relative in Behalf of Another Relative.

(3)—Supplication to a Loved One's Lover, in the Loved One's Behalf.

These three subdivisions have been used effectively in many photoplays, as we shall see when we analyze our examples. There is here a danger of repetition, and one should exercise especial care to make sure that one's treatment of these forms of Supplication is distinctive and novel. By a careful study of the examples given elsewhere, one will be able to avoid the timeworn and familiar usage and to devise novel and interesting variations.

On the whole, the First Situation has been used sparingly by modern dramatists and photoplaywrights and offers a good opportunity for future use. The essential trinity is capable of infinite variety, and with the original characterization of the Suppliant, Persecutor and Power, new variations of the subdivisions here given will suggest themselves.

Examples of photoplay value, of each of the dramatic Situations, will be found, arranged alphabetically, with suggestive comment, in subsequent chapters. The reader is advised to grasp thoroughly the information contained in this section of the book before proceeding to the examples, which will then be more valuable.

SECOND SITUATION—DELIVERANCE.

This situation is, in a sense, the converse of the first, and the elements are an Unfortunate, a Threatener and a Rescuer. In the modern photoplay it has been used chiefly as the development of Situation X, "Abduction," and its use in that way has been very much overdone. On the other hand, in almost every other form, it has been untouched, and offers alluring possibilities to the creative imagination. This situation is really the basis of chivalry, and when properly developed makes a deep appeal to emotional sympathy.

A—Appearance of a Rescuer to the Condemned.

In certain sensational melodramas, in which the hero was about to be executed on circumstantial evidence, this subdivision has formed the basis of the climax. Except in that sensational and hackneyed usage, it has not been developed in an interesting or appealing way.

B—Rescue by Friends, or by Strangers Grateful for Kindness or Hospitality.

Like the first, the second situation of the thirty-six has been ignored in its larger and subtler aspects, and offers many interesting suggestions to the alert and imaginative writer.

In studying this situation, try to conceive as many variations and subdivisions of **deliverance** as possible, creating distinctive characters and *visualizing* the action of the scenes in which the situation would be presented on the screen. Follow the same practice throughout your study, and your power of inventiveness and keenness of visualization will be increased tenfold.

THIRD SITUATION—CRIME PURSUED BY VENGEANCE.

In this situation we find the basis of a great many photoplays, for the theme of vengeance has been a vital element in the literature of all ages. In certain forms it may still be used with good effect, usually in combination with Situations XXIX and XXXIII, "An Enemy Loved" and "Erroneous Judgment." In general, however, the theme of vengeance makes less appeal to modern audiences than it obviously did in the past, and it has been used so frequently that especial care is required to make it effective. Particular attention is necessary in characterizing the human elements of the situation, the Avenger and the Criminal, for almost unconsciously one will allow one's imagination to follow the classic paths of imitation.

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- A (1)—The Avenging of a Slain Parent or Ancestor.**
(2)—The Avenging of a Slain Child or Descendant.
(3)—Vengeance for a Child Dishonored.
(4)—The Avenging of a Slain Wife or Husband.
(5)—Vengeance for the Dishonor, or Attempted Dishonoring of a Wife.
(6)—Vengeance for a Mistress Slain.
(7)—Vengeance for a Slain or Injured Friend.
(8)—Vengeance for a Sister Seduced

In considering the foregoing subdivisions of vengeance, try to recall all of the stage plays, short stories and photoplays you have seen or read in which this element occurs. All of these phases of vengeance have been used repeatedly by photoplaywrights and fictionists, many times effectively and often in mere commonplace imitation. Vengeance is by no means an exhausted situation, and when it is a manifestation of Compensation and Recoil, it often produces a most impressive dramatic effect. On the other hand, careful analysis and skillful characterization are necessary to make real and vital what has been done so often before.

Still other subdivisions, rather less melodramatic in tone, are:

- B (1)—Vengeance for Intentional Injury or Plundering.**
(2)—Vengeance for Having Been Despoiled During Absence.
(3)—Revenge for an Attempted Slaying.
(4)—Revenge for a False Accusation.
(5)—Vengeance for Violation.
(6)—Vengeance for Having Been Robbed of One's Own.
(7)—Revenge Upon a Whole Sex for a Deception by One.
C—Professional Pursuit of Criminals.

The last-named subdivision is closely related to Situation V, "Pursuit," in one of its subdivisions.

It is well to observe that B (7), in its modern variations, often forms the basis of comedy dramas. Various photoplays, comedies and comedy dramas, have incorporated this element, especially when either the hero was a woman-hater or the heroine a man-hater because of some disappointment in love.

The other phases of Vengeance have been chiefly used in Western photoplays, in those of Alaska or other frontiers, and in photoplays dealing with foreigners—Italians, Japanese, Russians, Mexicans, etc., in all of which cases the relative primitiveness of the characters lends a note of reality to the theme.

D—Pardon.

If any subdivision of a situation deserves mention by itself, on the score of not being covered by the general grouping, it is that of Pardon. Polti, in his cynical way, chooses to believe that Pardon is simply a reflective form of Vengeance, in which the pardoner heaps ashes upon him who craves pardon. But to realize its full and significant value in modern drama, one need only remember the spirit of Christianity and the glowing words of Shakespeare, "Pardon is the word to all!" The words of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," possess a definite dramatic quality, especially as they follow his "Self-Sacrifice for an Ideal."

FOURTH SITUATION—VENGEANCE TAKEN FOR KINDRED UPON KINDRED.

This situation is really a combination of the preceding, "Crime Pursued by Vengeance," with Situation XXVII, "Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One," and it possesses as many variations as there are ties of relationship between avenger and criminal. The number of possible variations may be obtained by multiplying those of Situation III by those of XXVII.

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In addition, many varying circumstances may determine the action of the Avenger. It may be a simple desire on his own part; the dying wish of the victim; an imprudent promise to the victim; the duty of avenging a crime, even though the criminal is a relative, as in the case of an official forced to prosecute a relative; ignorance of the kinship between the avenger and the criminal (which is related to Situation XIX, "Slaying of a Kinsman Unrecognized"), the avenger striking without having recognized the criminal; the discovery that the supposedly guilty kinsman is really innocent. Whatever circumstances give rise to the situation it will be seen from these brief suggestions that it can be used in a multitude of ways, many of them untouched by the photoplaywright of today.

A (1)—A Father's Death Avenged Upon a Mother.

(2)—A Mother Avenged Upon a Father.

B—A Brother's Death Avenged Upon a Son.

C—A Father's Death Avenged Upon a Husband.

D—A Husband's Death Avenged Upon a Father.

These subdivisions are each in a different class, but by carrying the relationships of the Avenger and Criminal into every possible degree, new variations will be apparent.

Like the preceding situation, this one should be used with a great deal of care and in combination with those which will relieve the horror of its effect. As the examples will indicate, this has sometimes been well done, but it is a difficult task. The situation should therefore only be used when the nature of your theme and characterization demands its use, and when nothing else will suffice. If it is inevitable in your photoplay, by all means use it, but first of all make sure that it is really inevitable and not the product of idle fancy or chance.

FIFTH SITUATION—PURSUIT.

This situation may be considered as a passive form of Situations III and IV, but in this case our interest is chiefly held by the Fugitive, rather than by the Pursuers. Whatever our hero may have been or may be, we are for the time being held by the stimulating interest of the chase. In dramas using this situation, the central character is placed in a sympathetic predicament whatever his previous actions may have been, for there is a deep, human urge to take the side of the man who is running away from danger. The purely physical excitement of the chase is sufficient to win our complete emotional sympathy, at least for the duration of the dramatic action.

For this reason Situation V possesses a direct and simple dramatic value, which probably accounts for its frequent use in melodramatic thrillers and in slapstick comedies. The public that appreciates this type of photoplay requires such a direct appeal. The climax of most farcical comedies is the chase, which has been used so frequently and in so many forms that it sometimes seems as though it will never again be effective. In photoplays of the "crook" type, in which the somehow heroic criminal flees from the punishment that threatens him; in plays in which the innocent prisoner escapes from jail and flees his pursuers who would re-incarcerate him; in slapstick and burlesque in which the blundering clown flees from those who are upset (often literally upset) by his actions; our interest is held in this simple, direct way.

Because of its direct and simple value this situation has been frequently employed, and therefore the writer must exercise a great deal of care in his development of it. But to the discerning photoplaywright, who can combine it in new ways with other situations and who can give the elemental characters new variations, there is still a great deal of dramatic opportunity in Situation V.

A—Fugitives from Justice Pursued for Brigandage, Political Offenses, Etc.

This, with the subdivision of Situation III—"Professional Pursuit of Criminals"—forms the basis of many detective, crook, mystery and serial photoplays. A careful study of such types of photoplays will indicate the variety of ways in which it has been used and the many variations still possible.

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B—Pursued For a Fault of Love.

This subdivision has its obvious dramatic value, but its use in the photoplay has been largely confined to comedies. A large percentage of screen comedies have in one way or another involved this element.

C—A Hero Struggling Against a Power.

D—A Villain Pursued by a Relentless Avenger. (In which the sympathy is at least partially with the villain, though we despise him for his weakness, because of the cold, inhuman relentlessness of the pursuer.)

SIXTH SITUATION—DISASTER.

This situation forms the basis of many Bible stories, of a great deal of classical literature—especially the Greek epics and dramas, and of most of the pages of history. Its dramatic significance is especially valuable because in its use the powerful are overthrown and the weak exalted. Whether the spectator be powerful or weak, the situation will have a tremendous psychological effect, for it brings home the frailty of human life and causes one to ponder the mysteries of the ways of unseen Powers.

A (1)—Defeat Suffered.

(2)—A Fatherland Destroyed.

(3)—The Fall of Humanity.

(4)—A Natural Catastrophe.

These subdivisions have been employed in such spectacular historic photoplays as "INTOLERANCE," "THE BIRTH OF A NATION," and "CABIRIA," and their photoplay value is almost entirely confined to productions of this class.

B—A Monarch Overthrown.

This, too, is historically significant, and its use in photoplays is largely confined to the stories of mythical kingdoms, South or Central American Republics, etc. The word "monarch" is used in its broadest sense, and the overthrow of any supremely powerful individual, or even class, may be considered as a part of the subdivision.

C (1)—Ingratitude Suffered.

(2)—The Suffering of Unjust Punishment or Enmity.

(3)—An Outrage Suffered.

The dramatic value of these subdivisions will be readily apparent, for there is perhaps no more poignant suffering than those indicated here. To create characters with whom the spectator will *suffer* and to use situations that call forth such sympathy is to succeed in a large measure in the writing of photoplays.

D (1)—Abandonment by a Lover or a Husband.

(2)—Children Lost by Their Parents.

These two subdivisions have been well nigh exhausted in the photoplay, as well as in stage drama, and although they are sometimes of logical value in a drama, they should be used with care and thought. They cannot be relied upon to make a deep appeal and should always be subordinated to more vital and interesting situations.

In general the Sixth Situation offers a wide opportunity for the photoplaywright and many of the dramas of the future will incorporate this element. The situation is the expression of a deep and human theme, one that never fails to hold the public's interest if it is treated skillfully. On the other hand, many writers have signally failed in handling this situation because of the temptation to rely upon chance in its development. The subdivision A (4), for example, which has been listed by at least one writer as a separate situation under the title "Miracle," is a pure act of Providence and has little dramatic value. In the Greek drama it was used with exceeding power because a sense of the inevitability of the Olympian interference in human affairs was easy to create. Modern audiences are not so naive in their theologies, and dramas involving such chance occurrences are nearly always artificial and ineffective.

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CHAPTER VI.

SEVENTH SITUATION—FALLING PREY TO CRUELTY OR MISFORTUNE.

This situation, like the preceding, appeals to the *sympathies* of an audience, for in this case the central character is placed in a seemingly hopeless Predicament. For this reason it is also excellent dramatic material, but considerable care must be exercised in selecting forms of cruelty and misfortune that will convince an audience of their reality. Exaggeration in this case will reduce the best-intended play to burlesque, and on the other hand the cruelty or misfortune must be serious enough to be of real emotional interest.

A—The Innocent Made the Victim of Ambitious Intrigue.

B—The Innocent Despoiled by Those Who Should Protect.

Both of these subdivisions recall the variations of the Cinderella theme, in which the heroine is a prey to the cruelty of a parent or guardian. So many variations of this theme have been developed that its popularity would seem to have waned, but since it again makes a clear and direct appeal to our sympathies, if it is treated with skill and some degree of novelty, it will be of genuine dramatic interest.

C (1)—The Powerful Dispossessed and Wretched.

(2)—A Favorite or an Intimate Finds Himself Forgotten.

D—The Unfortunate Robbed of Their Only Hope.

Innumerable other subdivisions remain. Much of the history of the world is that of persecution and suffering, and in the degree that we can awaken the sympathy of an audience by a presentation of such suffering it is of dramatic value. Scores of photoplays have been built upon some phase of this situation, but its scope is so great that it remains virtually untouched, offering a virgin field in which the creative fancy may gather material for its dreams.

EIGHTH SITUATION—REVOLT.

The Eighth Situation, in its more obvious and melodramatic phases, has been employed very frequently as the basis of melodramatic photoplays, usually of the serial type. But in the subtler and more interesting subdivisions it has been almost completely ignored. Perhaps this situation offers a better opportunity than any other, for it embraces the spirit of the times. When the revolter and the oppressor are clearly and humanly drawn, it makes a deep appeal.

A (1)—A Conspiracy Chiefly of One Individual.

(2)—A Conspiracy of Several.

The element of conspiracy is naturally a part of Revolt, but it is the obvious and melodramatic phase of the Situation. These subdivisions have been frequently used in mystery plays, in "crook" plays, and in various kinds of propaganda productions. Their value lies in the mystery and intrigue with which they may be developed, and the possibilities of creating and maintaining suspense. In thrilling and sensational melodrama they obviously have an important place, but in the more important types of drama they are of little value.

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B (1)—Revolt of One Individual, Who Influences and Involves Others.

(2)—A Revolt of Many.

The first of these two pure subdivisions of Revolt is of especial interest, and it has served effectively in a number of very modern stage plays, such as Shaw's "Fanny's First Play" and Stanley Houghton's "Hindle Wakes." Much of the best fiction of today, especially that which is realistic, is concerned with Revolt, either of one individual or of many. In the photoplay, the subject has been treated chiefly in capital and labor plays, which seldom possess a vital emotional appeal, and in plays dealing with similar social, rather than human, problems. Except in a few cases, which will be mentioned in the Examples, the subject of Revolt has not been dealt with in a really human way. For the screen, naturally, the revolt of one individual who influences others is of more value than that of many, for it leads to a greater concentration and dramatic tension.

The use of this situation in Comedy should be mentioned, for it is often provocative of a great deal of laughter. In addition to straight comedy, the attempt has been made, occasionally, to develop the situation in a satirical way. But satire is so entirely dependent upon words that it seems to be unsuited for the screen. A touch of satire in the subtitles is very often effective, but in general there must be some weightier emotional interest in photoplays. It is well to remember that although an actor may speak satirically, it is quite impossible for him to act satirically.

NINTH SITUATION—DARING ENTERPRISE.

The necessary elements of this situation are a Bold Leader, an Object and an Adversary. It will thus be seen that the Conflict which forms the basis of all the situations, is here clearly defined. The three factors of a dramatic triad are set forth, and the scene is laid for a tense and interesting drama. Situation IX has scarcely been touched by the modern drama, and it is especially suitable for the screen. The nature of the enterprise, the kinds of scenery required, the unusual romance of the theme, all make the situation of photoplay value. Like the situation of Revolt, it has been rarely used except as the basis of commonplace and ordinary melodrama. The infinite variations of the theme—depending upon the characters, the object sought, the many kinds of difficulties that could interfere with the Leader's success—have received little attention from the dramatist. Modern fiction, on the other hand, has some notable examples of this situation.

A—Preparation for War.

B (1)—War.

(2)—A Combat.

C (1)—Carrying Off a Desired Person or Object.

(2)—Recapture of a Desired Object.

These obvious subdivisions have been frequently employed, and they require careful treatment. At this time, the war element is especially exhausted and unpopular.

D (1)—Adventurous Expeditions.

(2)—Adventure Undertaken for the Purpose of Obtaining a Loved Woman.

(3)—Adventure Undertaken for the Purpose of Saving a Loved One's Honor.

Nearly all fairy tales, a great deal of romance, and especially the so-called "adventure" stories of today, are examples of the use of these subdivisions. They are capable of infinite and varied development, and they offer the observing and creative writer excellent suggestions for photoplays.

Situation IX is especially effective in combination with VIII, VI, XIII, but in almost every case it forms a sound basic situation. It must not be felt, however, that the situation should be used to excess merely because many of its phases have been

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neglected. But if the author brings to it a wide experience, a love of romance, and an ability to characterize charming and human adventures, he will probably achieve success in developing it.

TENTH SITUATION—ABDUCTION.

The necessary elements of this situation are the Abductor, the Abducted and the Guardian.

In the Tenth Situation we come upon one of the most exhausted dramatic predicaments. Perhaps no other situation of the entire thirty-six has been used so frequently as this one.

A—Abduction of an Unwilling Woman.

B—Abduction of a Consenting Woman.

C (1)—Recapture of the Woman Without the Slaying of the Abductor.

(2)—The Same Case, With the Slaying of the Abductor.

D (1)—Rescue of a Captive Friend.

(2)—Of a Child.

(3)—Of a Soul in Captivity to Error.

The situation of abduction has been used chiefly in melodramas and in serials. It has not been exhausted as a dramatic situation but it requires an especially careful development. Every phase of this situation has been repeatedly used with the exception of D (3). This subdivision offers an excellent opportunity for the photoplaywright to develop stories based upon vital, human and appealing themes. Infinite variations of D (3) are possible, and many of them may be used effectively on the screen. One of the examples we shall consider, "The Miracle Man," is an especially effective use of this subdivision. Other examples will show how hackneyed some of the more obvious subdivisions of the Tenth Situation are and will offer caution to the photoplaywright in their use.

Subdivision B deserves especial mention because of its value in comedy drama. The character of the consenting woman and the reasons for her consent, as well as the character of the abductor, in some cases perhaps an unwilling agent, will determine the value of its use. A very excellent comedy drama of the lighter kind might be written, for example, on the premise of a girl's desire to be abducted by her romantic hero. Although the situation has been used several times in this form, it is relatively fresh, and with proper characterization and comedic treatment it should prove very effective.

Unless some novelty of treatment of Situation X can be devised, the photoplaywright should eschew its use. But to the alert imagination it is still interesting.

ELEVENTH SITUATION—THE ENIGMA.

The necessary elements of this situation are the Interrogator, the Seeker and Problem.

Except in "crook" plays and in other mystery stories, Situation XI has not been used to any great extent in motion pictures. It is of theatrical value because it is one of the best situations for creating and sustaining suspense.

A—Search for a Person Who Must Be Found on Pain of Death.

B (1)—A Riddle to Be Solved on Pain of Death.

(2)—The Same Case, in Which the Riddle Is Proposed by the Coveted Woman.

C (1)—Temptations Offered With the Object of Discovering His Name.

(2)—Temptations Offered With the Object of Ascertaining the Sex.

(3)—Tests for the Purpose of Ascertaining the Mental Condition.

This situation is of importance as a means of developing suspense, but it should not be relied on to furnish vitality or emotional appeal to a play.

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These subdivisions were of more value in classic drama than in the photoplay of today, for they are all somewhat morbid and disagreeable; but they are suggestive of many variations of the same kind of enigmas, and in some of the examples we shall consider, we will find that the modern use of the enigma has been very effective.

A photoplay has sometimes been divided into three definite parts, corresponding to Aristotle's rule that a drama should possess a beginning, a middle, and an end. The photoplay may be said to have a premise, in which a question is asked; a development, in which certain clues to the answer are supplied, though the enigmatic nature of the question remains unchanged; and a conclusion, in which the true answer is supplied. Photoplays which follow the word as well as the spirit of this rule will usually fall into one or another phase of Situation XI.

The rule is worth remembering as a test of logical plot development.

TWELFTH SITUATION—OBTAINING.

A—Efforts to Obtain an Object by Ruse or Force.

B—Endeavor by Means of Persuasive Eloquence.

C—Eloquence With an Arbitrator.

It will be seen from these subdivisions that Situation XII bears a direct relation to Situations I and II, "Supplication" and "Deliverance." It might, indeed, be listed as a subdivision of either of these Situations but its use in the classical drama, particularly where the spoken word is of impressive dramatic value, requires its listing as a separate and distinct Situation. It has obvious melodramatic value, especially in Subdivision A, and in its more subtle phases, it is a milder, gentler Situation than I or II. However, the photoplaywright should not depend for vital dramatic effect upon it.

CHAPTER VII.

THIRTEENTH SITUATION—ENMITY OF KINSMEN.

The necessary elements are a Malevolent Kinsman, a Hated or Reciprocally Hating Kinsman.

Situation XIII is an excellent example of dramatic contrast. It might be stated, "hatred of one who should be loved" and is therefore the converse of Situation XXIX—"love of one who should be hated." The more closely are drawn the bonds of enmity, the more effective and dramatic will be the outbursts of hate. Also, this Situation possesses a great deal of dramatic tension. It is rather difficult to use it plausibly, for elements of discord powerful enough to break the strongest human ties are indeed very rare.

A—Hatred of Brothers.

(1)—One Brother Hated by Several.

(2)—Reciprocal Hatred.

(3)—Hatred Between Relatives for Reasons of Self-Interest.

B—Hatred of Father and Son.

(1)—Of the Son for the Father.

(2)—Mutual Hatred.

(3)—Hatred of Daughter for Father.

The enmity between father and daughter when the parent had desired a boy, or the reverse, is the most frequent use of this situation. The enmity of a mother-in-law and her son or daughter-in-law is, of course, the foundation of many burlesques and farcical comedies. Both of these manifestations may be mentioned as rather time-worn, and the writer should use the ideas suggested with great hesitance and care.

C—Hatred of Grandfather for Grandson.

D—Hatred of Father-in-law for Son-in-law.

E—Hatred of Mother-in-law for Daughter-in-law.

F—Infanticide.

The subdivisions here listed will indicate the many degrees of relationship that may be used to express Situation XIII. In a certain sense XIII is a variant of Situation VIII, "Revolt," for very often in the modern drama, the enmity of kinsmen is caused by the revolt of the young against the traditional conventions of the old. Such revolt does not always give rise to definite enmity, but often it approaches that.

The XIIIth Situation has its obvious climactic value in the photoplay and it has often been used effectively. The chief danger lies in its tendency towards exaggerated, unconvincing melodrama. The writer must make sure that his characterization, his theme, and every incident of his plot are plausible and convincing and that they lead inevitably to the use of Situation XIII. Only when it is used with seeming inevitability will it convince and really grip an audience.

FOURTEENTH SITUATION—RIVALRY OF KINSMEN.

The necessary elements are the Preferred Kinsman, the Rejected Kinsman and the Object. Situation XIV has been used very frequently, both in fiction and in the photo-

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play. The most obvious form in which it is frequently submitted to the studios is that of the good and bad brother in love with the same girl, the nobility of the one contrasted with the villainy of the other. Sometimes, the relationship is that of cousins, less often that of father and son or mother and daughter. There will always be a strength and vitality in Situation XIV, but as in the preceding case, there is a real danger of exaggeration and implausibility.

A (1)—**Malicious Rivalry of a Brother.**

(2)—**Malicious Rivalry of Two Brothers.**

(3)—**Rivalry of Two Brothers, with Adultery on the Part of One.**

(4)—**Rivalry of Sisters.**

B (1)—**Rivalry of Father and Son for an Unmarried Woman.**

(2)—**Rivalry of Father and Son for a Married Woman.**

(3)—**Case Similar to the Two Foregoing, but in Which the Object Is Already the Wife of the Father.**

(4)—**Rivalry of Mother and Daughter.**

C—**Rivalry of Cousins.**

D—**Rivalry of Friends.**

Situation XIV offers excellent opportunity to the really creative and original author. The examples cited later on will indicate the most frequent and therefore the least effective uses of this Situation, but to the writer with a clear understanding of human relationship, there are innumerable phases of rivalry of kinsman that have not been exploited by the modern author. The danger lies in the tendency to treat the Situation in a sensational and unconvincing way. It possesses a great deal of crude dramatic strength, but that part of it has been emphasized almost to the exclusion of its more subtle and more interesting phases.

When the subtler phases of the situation are used skillfully, with appealing characterization, as, for example, in "The Blinding Trail," it makes a very deep and poignant appeal. In that story, the rivalry between the two girls of quite opposite temperament and character, cousins, was combined with the sacrifice of the one for the other. It resulted in a deep, human drama that moved the audience, in a thrilling, though natural and restrained way.

FIFTEENTH SITUATION—MURDEROUS ADULTERY.

The necessary elements are Two Adulterers, a Betrayed Husband or Wife.

A (1)—**The Slaying of a Husband by or for a Paramour.**

(2)—**The Slaying of a Trusting Lover.**

B—**Slaying of a Wife for a Paramour and in Self-Interest.**

There is little room for this Situation in the photoplay, for whatever strength it may possess and however real it may be, it is not suitable for presentation to such a large audience as that of the photoplay. In classic drama it has been used with a great deal of effectiveness and in some cases poetic beauty, but in the photoplay it has nearly always been combined with Situation XXXIII, "Erroneous Judgment," in which case the murderous adultery does not develop but is averted.

SIXTEENTH SITUATION—MADNESS.

Madness in almost any form is of little value in the photoplay for again it is an unsuitable subject for photoplay production. There is a fascination about the subject which leads many writers to deal with it. Often it is used in a comedic way, but it has been found by experience that comedy based upon such a theme is ineffective. The gruesomeness of madness or the actions of madness are too revolting to possess genuine entertainment value. The subdivisions that have been used in classic drama are:

A (1)—**Kinsmen Slain in Madness.**

(2)—**A Lover Slain in Madness.**

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(3)—**Slaying or Injuring of a Person Not Hated.**

B—**Disgrace Brought Upon One's Self Through Madness.**

C—**Loss of Loved Ones Brought About by Madness.**

D—**Madness Brought On by Fear of Hereditary Insanity.**

Situation XVI bears a direct relationship to the XVIIth, "Fatal Imprudence," and to the XXIInd, "All Sacrificed for a Passion," but in both of these cases the madness is temporary, and therefore less revolting than in the phases we have just considered.

SEVENTEENTH SITUATION—FATAL IMPRUDENCE.

The necessary elements are the Imprudent, the Victim or the Object Lost.

A (1)—**Imprudence the Cause of One's Own Misfortune.**

(2)—**Imprudence the Cause of One's Own Dishonor.**

B (1)—**Curiosity the Cause of One's Own Misfortune.**

(2)—**Loss of Possession of a Loved One, Through Curiosity.**

C (1)—**Curiosity the Cause of Death or Misfortune to Others.**

(2)—**Imprudence the Cause of a Relative's Death.**

(3)—**Imprudence the Cause of a Lover's Death.**

(4)—**Credulity the Cause of Kinsmen's Deaths.**

Although the dramatic interest of this situation will be apparent from a listing of the subdivisions, its comedic value should be especially emphasized. Very often imprudence or curiosity has been used with a great deal of effect in one or two-reel comedies. The use of recoil in this connection is obviously effective. In comedy drama also the subdivisions A (1), B (1) and (2) may be developed skillfully and they are by no means hackneyed. In the purely dramatic phases, the situation is again somewhat unsuited to the screen because of its morbidity and unpleasantness.

EIGHTEENTH SITUATION—INVOLUNTARY CRIMES OF LOVE.

This situation is one of the most fantastic and implausible of the thirty-six. It is purely dependent upon chance, and its dramatic value is therefore minimized, but it evidently possesses a deep fascination for the average beginning writer. In one phase or another, the idea is submitted time after time. It has been used to exhaustion in the classical drama and in photoplays, but the chief objections are its dependence upon chance and the unpleasantness of its appeal.

A (1)—**Discovery That One Has Married One's Mother.**

(2)—**Discovery That One Has Had a Sister as Mistress.**

B (1)—**Discovery That One Has Married One's Sister.**

(2)—**The Same Case, in Which the Crime Has Been Villainously Planned by a Third Person.**

(3)—**Being Upon the Point of Taking a Sister, Unknowingly, as Mistress.**

C—**Being Upon the Point of Violating, Unknowingly, a Daughter.**

D (1)—**Being Upon the Point of Committing an Adultery Unknowingly.**

(2)—**Adultery Committed Unknowingly.**

The most frequent subdivision is that of B (1), which is submitted regularly to the motion picture studios until the editors feel there is no originality left in the world. But any and all of the subdivisions of this Situation should be studiously avoided, for they are dramatically valueless. The fundamental implausibility of such relationships and the depressing nature of any theme involving the Situation renders it unsuitable for photoplay use. The photoplaywright who really respects his medium and who wishes to inspire as well as to entertain his audience will avoid Situations of this type.

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CHAPTER VIII.

NINETEENTH SITUATION—SLAYING OF A KINSMAN UNRECOGNIZED.

Like the preceding Situation, this one is fundamentally implausible for it depends upon the accident of one's failure to recognize a kinsman.

A (1)—Being Upon the Point of Slaying a Daughter Unknowingly by Command of a Divinity or an Oracle.

(2)—Through Political Necessity.

(3)—Through a Rivalry in Love.

(4)—Through Hatred of the Lover of the Unrecognized Daughter.

B (1)—Being Upon the Point of Killing a Son Unknowingly.

(2)—A Son Slain Without Being Recognized.

C—Being Upon the Point of Slaying a Brother Unknowingly.

D—Slaying of a Mother Unrecognized.

E—A Father Slain Unrecognized.

F—Failure to Rescue an Unrecognized Son.

The foregoing subdivisions are listed chiefly because they will indicate to the photoplaywright various human relationships which should be avoided in writing for the screen. It is worth while noting that Shakespeare, who had the most thorough understanding of human nature and of dramatic values of any man who has ever written, never made use of Situation XIX. He recognized it as an altogether accidental situation and one which had no bearing upon his studies of the will. Because it is accidental, it does not provide the writer with a genuine opportunity for creating characters.

In this connection one should remember the dramatic formula: nature creates character, and character manifests itself in action. If the writer allows his characters to manifest themselves in accidents rather than in logical, natural action, the whole power of drama as a concentrated and impressive picture of life will be lost.

TWENTIETH SITUATION—SELF-SACRIFICE FOR AN IDEAL.

The self-sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross has been called the most inspiring moment in all human history. Certainly no situation is as noble as this one. Whatever the ideal may be, whether political, religious, personal or philosophical, the sacrifice of the central character of all interests, passions, even of life itself—a complete renunciation of the things commonly considered of value for the apotheosis of the ideal—constitutes one of the most inspiring human acts. It is capable of many variations and it is as fresh today as it was two thousand years ago, for nothing is so rare and nothing is so inspiring as such a sacrifice.

A (1)—Sacrifice of Life for the Sake of One's Word.

(2)—Life Sacrificed for the Success of One's People or for the Happiness of One's People.

(3)—Life Sacrificed in Filial Piety.

(4)—Life Sacrificed for the Sake of One's Faith or for the Sake of One's King.

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B (1)—Both Love and Life Sacrificed for One's Faith.

(2)—Both Love and Life Sacrificed to a Cause.

(3)—Love Sacrificed to Interests of State.

C—Sacrifice of Well-being to Duty.

D—The Ideal of Honor Sacrificed to the Ideal of Faith.

Despite the nobility and the dramatic value of Situation XX it must not be supposed that any simple use of the theme of "self-sacrifice for an ideal" will constitute effective photoplay material. As in every other case, the theme must be authentic, vital and humanly appealing and the characters must be drawn in effective contrast. Because of its inherent fineness, this situation should be used only when the other elements of a story justify its use and make it necessary. The writer should avoid selecting material simply because it has been considered effective or of value. Let your ideas spring from a knowledge and love of life and use this work merely as a critical guide and reference.

TWENTY-FIRST SITUATION—SELF-SACRIFICE FOR KINDRED.

A (1)—Life Sacrificed for That of a Relative or a Loved One.

(2)—Life Sacrificed for the Happiness of a Relative or a Loved One.

B (1)—Ambition Sacrificed for the Happiness of a Parent.

(2)—Ambition Sacrificed for the Life of a Parent.

C (1)—Love Sacrificed for the Sake of a Parent's Life.

(2)—For the Happiness of One's Child or for the Happiness of a Loved One.

D (1)—Life and Honor Sacrificed for the Life of a Parent or Loved One or the Same Sacrifice Made for the Honor of a Loved One.

(2)—Modesty Sacrificed for the Life of a Relative or a Loved One.

The twenty-first Situation possesses a warm human quality that even the preceding one lacks, but self-sacrifice for a relative or for a loved one has formed the basis of a great many fiction stories and photoplays. The theme, unless treated with distinction and novelty, is very trite. But there are many ways in which the basic idea of this situation may be used with effect. The subdivisions listed above indicate the tension possible in the use of this situation and if it is treated as an authentic development of the relationship of real, living characters, it will make powerful photoplay material. But the photoplaywright should be especially careful to analyze his characterization, his theme and his plot elements in order to determine whether or not they possess a freshness of viewpoint that will hold the interest of the spectator.

TWENTY-SECOND SITUATION—ALL SACRIFICED FOR A PASSION.

A (1)—Religious Vows of Chastity Broken for a Passion.

(2)—A Vow of Purity Broken.

(3)—A Future Ruined by a Passion.

(4)—Power Ruined by Passion.

(5)—Ruin of Mind, Health and Life.

B—Temptations, Destroying the Sense of Duty.

C (1)—Destruction of Honor, Fortune and Life by Erotic Vice.

(2)—The Same Effect Produced by Any Other Vice.

The chief use of this situation in photoplays has been in stories which traced the downfall of man or woman, caused by drunkenness, gambling, the use of drugs, etc., but the tendency of the producers and the public is to avoid subjects of this type. There is little demand for studies in physical or moral degeneration. Unless this Situation is used merely as the premise of a photoplay and the action developed along

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an entirely different line after the idea of sacrifice for passion is planted, the situation will have little dramatic value. In this connection especial mention should be made of the degeneration of noble heroes, caused by women of the "vampire" type. To label a certain character a "vampire" is merely to indicate a type. Stories involving such characters and such conflicts are usually unreal and implausible. This Situation has been used effectively by Shakespeare, Sardou, Oscar Wilde and Biblical authors, but from the screen standpoint, it is of little straight dramatic value.

The subdivisions listed above may suggest only the melodramatic or morbid phases of the Situation, but there have been a number of comedies and comedy dramas developed from the same theme. Consider subdivision C (2), for example. In a comedy this idea might be developed in this way: A young husband with a "passion" for poker deceives his wife, who becomes jealous (XXXII), etc., etc. Similar mild and amusing "passions" might lead to the loss of loved ones, thus offering a good opportunity for the writer who can appreciate the irony of such a use of recoil.

TWENTY-THIRD SITUATION—NECESSITY OF SACRIFICING LOVED ONES.

A (1)—Necessity for Sacrificing a Daughter in the Public Interest.

(2)—Duty of Sacrificing Her in Fulfillment of a Vow to God.

(3)—Duty of Sacrificing Benefactors or Loved Ones to One's Faith.

B (1)—Duty of Sacrificing One's Child, Unknown to Others, Under the Pressure of Necessity.

(2)—Duty of Sacrificing Under the Same Circumstances, One's Father, One's Husband, One's Son-in-law, One's Brother-in-law or Another Relative.

(3)—Duty of Contending With a Friend.

This Situation has seldom been used in any of the phases here listed in photoplays. It is closely related to Situation XXI, "Self-Sacrifice for Kindred," and also to Situation XIII, "Enmity of Kindred," but its chief use has been in classic drama. There are relatively few cases in modern life in which a character has fulfilled the duty or the urgent necessity of sacrificing loved ones. Ethics of today are more highly developed than those of Greece or Rome, and there is no longer an emotionally interesting sense of duty so intense. On the other hand, there have been occasional fiction stories and photoplays in which Situation XXIII has been used in a mild form. When we take up the examples, we shall find in certain political stories in which, for instance, an authority, such as a judge, is compelled by sense of duty to sacrifice a loved one—and in other dramas of the same type, a partial use of Situation XXIII.

Situations XX, XXI, XXII and XXIII are closely related and they are based upon the same general theme of self-sacrifice. They have genuine dramatic value, especially the first two of the four, and if used with a sense of characterization values and skillful plot intelligence, they will form the basis of many successful photoplays. An ever-present danger lies in the tendency to sentimentalize over this theme, especially in dealing with the often-used idea of a mother's sacrifice for her child and similar cases.

There is a very fine line between warm, human sentiment, an appeal to the deepest feelings of an audience, and mawkish, tiresome, exaggerated sentimentality. This is largely a matter of characterization, but the writer must beware of the pitfalls of sentimentality inherent in such situations.

TWENTY-FOURTH SITUATION—RIVALRY OF SUPERIOR AND INFERIOR.

In a sense, this Situation is a logical development of the VIIIth, "Revolt," and is often so used in the photoplay. It is of almost equal effectiveness in comedy or serious drama, for there is a compelling appeal to our sympathies in any situation in which so clean and vital a struggle is apparent. This situation lends itself to many combi-

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nations. We have already referred to its use with the VIIIth, but it is similarly of dramatic interest in combination with I, "Supplication"; II, "Deliverance"; III, "Crime Pursued by Vengeance"; VII, "Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune," all of the situations dealing with Sacrifice, XXXIII, "Erroneous Judgment," etc. It therefore serves as an excellent basic situation, and if properly combined and developed it will be of great value to the writer. In this situation we have again a very fine example of the use of dramatic contrast. The necessary elements are the Superior Rival, the Inferior Rival and the Object, and the conflict is expressed in the situation itself.

A—Masculine Rivalries. (1)—Of a Mortal and an Immortal.

(2)—Of a Magician and an Ordinary Man.

(3)—Of Conqueror and Conquered. Of a Master and a Banished Man.

(4)—Of Suzerain King and Vassal Kings.

(5)—Of a King and a Noble.

(6)—Of a Powerful Person and an Upstart.

(7)—Of Rich and Poor.

(8)—Of an Honored Man and a Suspected One.

(9)—Rivalry of Two Who Are Almost Equal.

(10)—Rivalry of Equals, One of Whom Has in the Past Been Guilty of Adultery.

(11)—Of a Man Who Is Loved and One Who Has Not the Right to Love.

(12)—Of the Two Successive Husbands of a Divorcee.

B—Feminine Rivalries. (1)—Of a Sorceress and an Ordinary Woman.

(2)—Of Victor and Prisoner.

(3)—Of Queen and Subject.

(4)—Of a Queen and a Slave.

(5)—Of a Lady and a Servant.

(6)—Of a Lady and a Woman of Humbler Position, and of a Lady and Two Women of Humbler Class.

(7)—Rivalry of Two Who Are Almost Equals, Complicated by the Abandonment of One.

(8)—Rivalry Between a Memory or an Ideal—(That of a Superior Woman) and a Vassal of Her Own.

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CHAPTER IX.

TWENTY-FIFTH SITUATION—ADULTERY.

This situation, like XV, "Murderous Adultery," must be dealt with very carefully in writing for the screen, because of its salacious and sensational element. It has been used skillfully in photoplays and has made a genuine dramatic appeal, but unless it is used in combination with Situations XXXII, XXXIII or XXXIV, it does not possess real strength.

In such cases it is not "Adultery" properly, but it possesses the strength and interest of the basic conflict of "Adultery" without the disagreeable and unpleasant developments.

- A—A Mistress Betrayed: (1)—For a Younger Woman.
 - (2)—For a Young Wife.
 - (3)—For a Girl.
- B—A Wife Betrayed: (1)—For a Slave, Who Does Not Love in Return.
 - (2)—For Debauchery.
 - (3)—For a Married Woman.
 - (4)—With the Intention of Bigamy.
 - (5)—For a Young Girl, Who Does Not Love in Return.
 - (6)—A Wife Envied by a Young Girl Who Is in Love With Her Husband.
 - (7)—By a Courtesan.
 - (8)—Rivalry Between a Lawful Wife Who Is Antipathetic and a Mistress Who Is Congenial.
 - (9)—Between a Generous Wife and an Impassioned Girl.
- C (1)—An Antagonistic Husband Sacrificed for a Congenial Lover.
 - (2)—A Husband, Believed to Be Lost, Forgotten for a Rival.
 - (3)—A Commonplace Husband Sacrificed for a Sympathetic Lover.
 - (4)—A Good Husband Betrayed for an Inferior Rival.
 - (5)—For a Grotesque Rival.
 - (6)—For an Odious Rival.
 - (7)—For a Commonplace Rival, But a Perverse Wife.
 - (8)—For a Rival Less Handsome, But Useful.
- D (1)—Vengeance of a Deceived Husband.
 - (2)—Jealousy Sacrificed for the Sake of a Cause.
- E—A Husband Persecuted by a Rejected Rival.

The writer should avoid this and similar subjects entirely unless he is positive that his theme and his characterization are of sufficient dramatic value to justify such a sensational element. The subdivisions are listed here as a reference of what to avoid rather than as suggestions for development.

Despite the fact that this situation is sensational and suggestive, its subdivisions are of genuine dramatic interest, as a close examination will show, and if one can

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suggest the conflicts implied without revealing the action in a crude and depressing manner, they are useful. This has been done in a number of successful photoplays, by suggestion and implication, notably in a minor episode of "For Husbands Only." Most often, however, as in the successful "Don't Change Your Husband," the essential conflict of this situation was made agreeable by the divorce, marriage, divorce and remarriage of the principals. In such a use the situation is definitely a phase of the preceding, "Rivalry Between a Superior and Inferior," but it possesses the added "love interest." Largely because of its tense element of conflict this situation should be carefully studied by the student, for it is of exceptional value in its subtler and more delicate subdivisions.

TWENTY-SIXTH SITUATION—CRIMES OF LOVE.

This situation is of even less dramatic value than XVIII, "Involuntary Crimes of Love." In that case, the lack of drama was due to the accidental nature of relationship. In this case, we deal with erotic, depressing, diseased and psychopathic manifestations. It is not worth while listing all the subdivisions that have been used in classical drama, but it is necessary to mention a few, such as:

A Mother in Love With Her Son;

A Daughter in Love With Her Father;

A Woman Enamored of Her Stepson; or a Woman and Her Stepson Enamored;

A Woman Being the Mistress at the Same Time of a Father and Son, Both of Whom Accept the Situation;

A Man Being the Lover of a Sister-in-law;

Brother and Sister in Love With Each Other.

The only two nuances of this situation that are allowable in the photoplay are: A woman enamoured of her stepson, or a woman and her stepson enamoured of each other; and a man enamoured of his sister-in-law, or stepmother. If these phases are used in combination with other situations that relieve the depressing effect, they have their place in dramas of a certain class.

The other crimes of love should be obviously acknowledged as unsuitable for the wide audience of the screen, but the frequent submission of the theme—"a brother and sister in love with each other"—requires a word of caution. Even though it is combined with Situation XXXIII, "Erroneous Judgment," and the relationship thus proved non-existent, it is terribly hackneyed and too depressing for photoplay treatment. It lacks what all good photoplays must have—"entertainment value."

Situation XXVI should therefore be avoided almost entirely, except in the two phases mentioned above, and they should be used with a great deal of reluctance.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SITUATION—DISCOVERY OF THE DISHONOR OF A LOVED ONE.

This situation is related to the XXIIIrd, "Sacrifice of Loved Ones." There is a great deal of dramatic tension in any discovery of the dishonor of a loved one, especially if the loved one has been held in high esteem before. The subdivisions listed below are mostly sensational and melodramatic, for that is the tendency of the dramatists of the past, but there is plenty of room for new and interesting developments of the XXVIIth Situation, especially in A (1), A (2), D (1) and D (5). In its more subtle forms, Situation XXVII possesses a dramatic value unequalled by any except the four dealing with self-sacrifice, but again there is the danger of sensational, exaggerated, implausible development. The author should test his plot and his characterizations thoroughly before he finally decides upon the use of Situation XXVII.

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Lest it seem that too great stress has been laid upon the purely dramatic and melodramatic phases of some of the situations we have considered, it is well to remember that almost every situation may also be treated in a comedic way. The situation is the bare plot basis; characterization, development, treatment make the finished play definitely drama, melodrama, comedy drama or comedy. In this case, for example, subdivisions B (1), B (5) and B (7) are susceptible of comedic treatment.

- A (1)—Discovery of a Mother's Shame.
- (2)—Discovery of a Father's Shame.
- (3)—Discovery of a Daughter's Dishonor.
- B (1)—Discovery of a Dishonor in the Family of One's Fiancee.
- (2)—Discovery That One's Wife Has Been Violated Before Marriage—Since the Marriage.
- (3)—Discovery that She Has Previously Committed a Fault.
- (4)—Discovery that One's Wife Has Formerly Been a Wanton.
- (5)—Discovery of Dishonor on the Part of a Lover.
- (6)—Discovery that One's Mistress, Formerly a Wanton, Has Returned to Her Old Life.
- (7)—Discovery That One's Lover Is a Scoundrel, or That One's Mistress Is a Woman of Bad Character. The Same Discovery Concerning a So-called King.
- (8)—The Same Discovery Concerning One's Wife.
- C—Discovery That One's Son Is an Assassin.
- D (1)—Duty of Punishing a Son Who Is a Traitor to Country—A Brother Who Is a Traitor to His Party.
- (2)—Duty of Punishing a Son Condemned Under a Law Which the Father Has Made.
- (3)—Duty of Punishing a Son Believed to Be Guilty.
- (4)—Duty of Sacrificing, to Fulfill a Vow of Tyrannicide, a Father Until Then Unknown.
- (5)—Duty of Punishing One's Mother to Avenge One's Father.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SITUATION—OBSTACLES TO LOVE.

- A (1)—Marriage Prevented by Inequality of Rank.
- (2)—Inequality of Fortune an Impediment to Marriage.
- B—Marriage Prevented by Enemies and Contingent Obstacles.
- C (1)—Marriage Forbidden on Account of the Young Woman's Previous Betrothal to Another.
- (2)—The Same Case, Complicated by an Imaginary Marriage of the Beloved Object.
- D (1)—A Free Union Impeded by the Opposition of Relatives.
- (2)—Family Affection Disturbed by the Parents-in-law.
- E—By the Incompatibility of Temper of the Lovers.

Although this situation in some of the preceding subdivisions has been used repeatedly as the basis of melodrama, its chief photoplay value lies in comedy drama and straight comedy. A (1), (2), C (1), (2), D (2) are excellent bases for comedy and comedy drama. Indeed, it may be estimated that about fifty per cent of the comedy dramas that have been produced have been combinations of Situations XXVIII and XXXIII. The obvious obstacles have been exhausted by too frequent use, but there are so many variations that can be devised to separate or estrange lovers that the situation is still virtually untouched by the dramatist. A keen study and observation of

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life will offer many suggestions of ways to use this situation. In fact, obstacles to love are of most frequent occurrence in the stormy life of youth and any real understanding of life will be suggestive of new variations on this theme.

TWENTY-NINTH SITUATION—AN ENEMY LOVED.

This situation bears a close relation to V, "Pursuit," and to III, "Crime Pursued by Vengeance," but it possesses the additional strength of the love element. It has formed the basis of innumerable Western melodramas and has been used in virtually all of the "feud" stories, of various locales. The love, for example, of the daughter of a moonshiner for a revenue officer, or the love of a cattle rancher's daughter for an enemy sheep owner are two familiar cases of its use. Because of its particular screen value, it has been exhausted in many forms, and if the photoplaywright finds it a necessary part of a play, he should make sure first of all that the theme and characters are worthy of careful development.

In its comedic form the situation is virtually the same as subdivision B of the XXVIIIth. From that standpoint, also, the situation has been cheapened by too frequent use and the writer should be very careful in developing it.

A—The Loved One Hated by Kinsmen of the Lover.

(1)—The Lover Pursued by the Brothers of His Beloved.

(2)—The Lover Hated by the Family of His Beloved.

(3)—The Lover Is the Son of a Man Hated by the Kinsmen of His Beloved.

(4)—The Beloved Is an Enemy of the Party of the Woman Who Loves Him.

B (1)—The Lover Is the Slayer of the Father of His Beloved.

(2)—The Beloved Is the Slayer of the Father of Her Lover.

(3)—The Beloved Is the Slayer of the Brother of Her Lover.

(4)—The Beloved Is the Slayer of the Husband of the Woman Who Loves Him, but Who Has Previously Sworn to Avenge That Husband.

(5)—The Same Case, Except That a Lover, Instead of a Husband, Has Been Slain.

(6)—The Beloved Is the Slayer of a Kinsman of the Woman Who Loves Him.

(7)—The Beloved Is the Daughter of the Slayer of Her Lover's Father.

THIRTIETH SITUATION—AMBITION.

The necessary elements of this situation are an Ambitious Person, a Thing Coveted, and an Adversary. The passion of ambition is one of the most intellectual and deeply appealing of human emotions. Its forms are myriad, depending upon the character of the ambitious person and the infinite variations of the thing desired. Strangely enough, this situation, which is suggestive of plots dealing with the basic emotional conflicts of humanity, has been practically ignored by dramatists of today. It consequently offers a large and suggestive field to the photoplaywright who understands and can interpret the multifarious expressions of ambition.

A—Ambition Watched and Guarded Against by a Kinsman or a Patriot Friend.

(1)—By a Brother.

(2)—By a Relative or a Person Under Obligation.

(3)—By Partisans.

B—Rebellious Ambition.

"Rebellious Ambition" is closely related to VIII, "Revolt," but it is even stronger than that, for it is more soundly motivated.

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A valuable exercise for the reader will be to conceive as many forms of Ambition as possible, and then to trace their logical combination with other situations. This practice is of value in every case, but in Situation XXX it will be especially stimulating. The only way to develop plot ability is to create plots. With this situation as a beginning, outline, in accordance with the method suggested before, at least ten plots. Then analyze each one in turn, testing its strength and value. In this way you will acquire a keen critical power and an imaginative alertness.

C (1)—Ambition and Covetousness Heaping Crime Upon Crime.

(2)—Parricidal Ambition, or Ambitious Desire to Slay a Parent for Self-Aggrandizement.

CHAPTER X.

THIRTY-FIRST SITUATION—STRUGGLE AGAINST A GOD.

- A (1)—**Struggle Against a Deity.**
- (2)—**Strife With the Believers in a God.**
- B (1)—**Controversy With a Deity.**
- (2)—**Punishment for Contempt of a God.**
- (3)—**Punishment for Pride Before a God.**
- (4)—**Presumptuous Rivalry With a God.**
- (5)—**Imprudent Rivalry With a Deity.**

This situation deals with the supreme strife, and forms the basis of the greatest dramas of all time. Except in A (2) it has rarely been used in the photoplay, for its popular appeal is obviously not great. It requires a breadth of treatment and a philosophical insight which are indeed rare, and although it may occasionally be employed in one of its minor phases, as, for example, in a story dealing with the bitter struggle of an atheist to deny God, only to find in the end that God is omnipotent, its general value is rather limited. Lois Weber's production, "When a Girl Loves," made use of that phase of the situation in the beginning of the story, but it quickly merged into a more human and appealing struggle.

Since this situation is representative of the strife supreme, every other that presents a clear case of conflict may in a sense be considered a phase of it. In a great spectacular production with Situation XXXI as the basis, it is conceivable that ten or more other situations might be used in combination with it to excellent dramatic advantage. Judging its value according to the usual productions, however, its possibilities are limited.

THIRTY-SECOND SITUATION—MISTAKEN JEALOUSY.

The necessary elements of this situation are the Jealous One, the Object of whose possession he is jealous, and the Supposed Accomplish, the cause or the author of the mistake.

Perhaps no other situation, except X, "Abduction," has been used so repeatedly in the photoplay as this one. It is therefore necessary to analyze one's use of it very carefully in order to determine its effectiveness.

A (1)—**The Mistake Originates in the Suspicious Mind of the Jealous One.**

- (2)—**Mistaken Jealousy Aroused by a Fatal Chance.**

"Mistaken Jealousy" is of equal value in drama and comedy, and for that very reason the writer must be careful to make his story definitely the one thing or the other. If, for example, one uses it in a dramatic way, but allows one or more episodes to take a satirical or comedic turn, the entire effort will be an ineffective burlesque. Again, therefore, the characterization and the treatment are all-important. In general, however, it is far safer to use the situation in comedy and comedy drama than in any other way.

The usual melodramatic way of bringing this situation to a logical conclusion—by a murder, a suicide, or a divorce or separation involving enmity—is very hackneyed

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and unsatisfactory in the photoplay, because it is the easiest and least dramatic way of devising a climax.

The dramatic appeal of this situation will require its presence in many of the photoplays of the future, but in its use there must be novelty and distinction of treatment or it will be mere imitation of the dramatists of the past.

A (3)—Mistaken Jealousy of a Love Which Is Purely Platonic.

(4)—Baseless Jealousy Aroused by Malicious Rumors.

B (1)—Jealousy Suggested by a Traitor Who Is Moved by Hatred.

(2)—The Same Case, in Which the Traitor Is Moved by Self-Interest.

B (3)—The Same Case, in Which the Traitor Is Moved by Jealousy and Self-Interest.

C (1)—Reciprocal Jealousy Suggested to Husband and Wife by Rival.

(2)—Jealousy Suggested to the Husband by a Dismissed Suitor.

(3)—Jealousy Suggested to the Husband by a Woman Who Is in Love With Him.

(4)—Jealousy Suggested to the Wife by a Scorned Rival.

(5)—Jealousy Suggested to a Happy Lover by the Deceived Husband.

THIRTY-THIRD SITUATION—ERRONEOUS JUDGMENT.

Situation XXXIII should be considered as a very valuable secondary situation, one by which the horror or depression of some of the others may be relieved. Any kind of mistaken or erroneous judgment may be understood as embraced by this general grouping. In its more specific cases, its chief use has been in dramas involving the now timeworn idea of circumstantial evidence, false accusation against the hero, or against the heroine, which in most cases has been brought to a happy ending by the confession—usually dying confession—of the villain. Because this situation places the entire burden of responsibility upon the much-abused villain, it is likely to be unreal. The general idea of false suspicion falling upon one innocent, because of the activity of a "villain," has been almost exhausted as photoplay material, and its future use must be logical, plausible and convincing. Especial attention must be paid to the characterization of the villain, for upon him the situation rests.

A (1)—False Suspicion—of a Mistress.

(2)—False Suspicions Aroused by a Misunderstood Attitude of a Loved One.

(3)—By Indifference.

B (1)—False Suspicions Drawn Upon One's Self to Save a Friend.

(2)—They Fall Upon the Innocent. Upon the Innocent Husband of the Guilty One.

(3)—The Same Case as (2), but in Which the Innocent Had a Guilty Intention; in Which Case the Innocent Believes Himself Guilty.

(4)—A Witness to the Crime, in the Interest of a Loved One, Lets Accusation Fall Upon the Innocent.

C (1)—The Accusation Is Allowed to Fall Upon an Enemy.

(2)—The Error Is Provoked by an Enemy.

(3)—The Mistake Is Directed Against the Victim by Her Brother.

D (1)—False Suspicion Thrown by the Real Culprit Upon One of His Enemies.

(2)—Thrown by the Real Culprit Upon the Second Victim Against Whom He Has Plotted from the Beginning.

(3)—False Suspicion Thrown Upon a Rival.

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(4)—**Thrown Upon One Innocent, Because He Has Refused to be an Accomplice.**

(5)—**Thrown by a Deserted Mistress Upon a Lover Who Left Her Because He Would Not Deceive Her Husband.**

(6)—**Struggle to Rehabilitate One's Self and to Avenge a Judicial Error Purposely Caused.**

THIRTY-FOURTH SITUATION—REMORSE.

Situation XXXIV possesses something of the appeal of "Pardon" and "Self-Sacrifice for an Ideal or for Kindred," with which it is often combined. From the photoplay standpoint it is of secondary value, but it cannot be relied upon to supply vitality or a tense emotional conflict. The struggle is really within the remorseful person, and it is therefore a less objective conflict than most we have considered.

A (1)—**Remorse for an Unknown Crime.**

(2)—**Remorse for a Parricide.**

(3)—**Remorse for an Assassination. For a Judicial Murder.**

(4)—**Remorse for a Murder of Husband or Wife.**

B (1)—**Remorse for a Fault of Love.**

(2)—**Remorse for an Adultery.**

A (1) and B (1) are of particular interest, but the other subdivisions involve a preceding kind of action that lacks entertainment value. They should therefore only be used when the action that leads to the remorse can be suggested rather than shown objectively.

There is an intense interest in the characterization of a remorseful person, but since it is so purely subjective it can usually be treated more effectively in the short story or the novel than in a dramatic work. The writer should therefore carefully consider the screen value of the characterization before incorporating this situation into a photoplay. If it lacks screen value, consider it from the viewpoint of other forms of fiction, and try to utilize it in the most effective way.

THIRTY-FIFTH SITUATION—RECOVERY OF A LOST ONE.

This is the situation editors meet so frequently in stories of stolen children reunited with their parents after many years. It is the basis of many Gypsy tales, stories of the Orient in which the child is reared as an Oriental, stories of revengeful incarceration, and similar tales of intrigue. Its invariable ending comes when the mother and the child break out simultaneously with a glad cry: "My mother!" "My child!" Its dramatic value has been exhausted by very frequent use, and it is usually so dependent upon coincidence that it fails to produce a genuine dramatic effect. In the majority of the stories submitted involving this factor the authors seem to feel that the mere reunion between parents and children is sufficient to sway an audience. Unless, however, there are very unusual circumstances in the lives of both parents and children, its effect is mere mawkish sentimentality. If, however, the situation is used in a relatively minor episode of a plot as a natural part of an otherwise strong story, there is no vital objection to it. Only when it forms the climax—for which it is manifestly unsuited—does it become hopeless.

THIRTY-SIXTH SITUATION—LOSS OF LOVED ONES.

A (1)—**Witnessing the Slaying of Kinsmen, While Powerless to Prevent It.**

(2)—**Helping to Bring Misfortune Upon One's People Through Professional Secrecy.**

B—**Divining the Death of a Loved One.**

C—**Learning of the Death of a Kinsman or Ally.**

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D—Relapse Into Primitive Baseness, Through Despair on Learning of the Death of a Loved One.

In its photoplay uses Situation XXXVI is usually related to the VIIth, "Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune," as the result of the loss of a loved one who is at the same time a protector. In this form it is therefore of value as an inceptive situation, but it does not form a vital basis for a photoplay. It is an excellent transitional situation, carrying the action from one tense moment to another, and is therefore frequently useful. Used in improper combinations, or in cases where the loss of a loved one and its concomitant grief are exaggerated or drawn out, the situation is ineffective and without value.

SUMMARY OF SITUATIONS.

The reader should aim to familiarize himself with the contents of the foregoing pages in order to be capable of critical analysis, not only of his own work but also of produced photoplays and published stories. A thorough acquaintance with the situations will enable the photoplaywright to study and analyze fiction and photoplays in a systematic and helpful way.

In the process of creation analysis invariably precedes construction. The more sound and comprehensive one's analytical powers, the more fecund and novel will be one's work. The only writers who are "inspired" are those who have a sound analytical background, who have thoroughly saturated themselves in literature and in life. It is therefore necessary that the beginning writer acquire some standard of critical judgment with which to estimate the value and the strength of current productions and of his own work. It is impossible for one to have too thorough knowledge of the fundamental thirty-six situations, for such knowledge will supply the writer with critical standards and with an analytical method. Study the preceding pages carefully, diligently, and endeavor to carry the knowledge thus gained into the theatre with you.

More important than the study of Situations, however, is the study of life. Only from an acquaintance with the life of which one desires to write will one find the inspiration and the stimulus for creative effort. Develop an observing attitude, studying the people you meet and know, inventing plots about them, placing them in likely and dramatic conflicts, and seeking in every way to interpret the life you are living. Even while you are in the midst of adventures try to preserve the attitude of the spectator. Learn to look at events objectively. Then when you come to interpret them you will place them objectively before the spectator.

Use the foregoing lists of situations as a reference by which to test everything you write. In addition to the examples that we shall now consider, strive to find new examples for each of the situations and its subdivisions. Whenever you view a photoplay or read a short story endeavor to test it in accordance with the suggestions already given. Do not merely be content with placing it in a certain category, but go further and analyze its theme, its characterization, the logic of its plot, its dramatic and pictorial effectiveness. Take your profession seriously and sincerely, and endeavor to be as well qualified for the work you are undertaking as a lawyer or a physician or an artist is qualified for his profession.

To the studious, thoughtful person possessing genuine creative ability and the desire to write, the photoplay offers a fascinating and highly remunerative opportunity. But it does not supply a short-cut to quick and easy success for the lazy, the incompetent, or the unimaginative.

Study, Think, Create!

PART THREE

PHOTOPLAY PLOT ENCYCLOPEDIA

CHAPTER XI

EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS IN PHOTOPLAYS.

The brief synopses of recently produced photoplays in the following pages are presented for study and analysis. The limitations of space do not permit the publication of elaborate or detailed synopses, but in most cases the brief synopses will illustrate with sufficient clarity the use of the situations in question.

The photoplays selected as examples constitute an average and fairly representative group. They are chosen for the purpose of illustrating errors, as well as merits, in construction and the use of situations. The reader should therefore not compare his own work favorably with some of the stories here discussed and expect a ready sale if he feels that his work is as good as that produced. The editors and the producers know good stories when they read them, but the dearth of worth-while material sometimes necessitates inferior productions.

Remember also that the motion picture is a new industry and that it is making vast strides in advance. Do not allow yourself to be easily satisfied with your own work, simply because you like it or your friends like it. If it is good screen material, it will sell. We say this positively, for the Photoplay Sales Department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation has found all of the editors and producers eager to read stories that were really worth-while. If your work does not sell, there is something wrong with it, and you must therefore renew your analysis and endeavor to strengthen the weaknesses. Do not put all of your eggs in one basket. When you have created a story that is as fine as you can possibly write, set to work to write a better one.

Once you are satisfied with a photoplay, submit it for sale, but do not sit back and wait complacently for the check. The creation of stories is your work, and if you will keep on working with sincerity and persistence even in the face of disheartening rejections, the chances are you will win eventually. Do not give up until you have definitely proved that you are a success or a failure, for any amount of hard work will be amply repaid when you begin to sell your stories.

In considering the examples analyze the combinations of situations and try to place yourself in the position of the author. Endeavor to feel as he felt when he started to write the story. Test its purpose, its theme, the possible inspiration of a character he happened to know, and try to determine just what prompted a certain author to write a certain story. Then endeavor to apply the same critical process to all of the photoplays you view. You will find that the cultivation of such a method will sharpen your wits and make your daily experiences more interesting.

Let us now proceed to a consideration of the examples.

"DANGEROUS CURVE AHEAD."

(Goldwyn production; starring Helene Chadwick and Richard Dix; story and continuity by Rupert Hughes; directed by E. Mason Hopper.)

SYNOPSIS.

The belle of a small town, Phoebe Mabee, loves Harley Jones, but finds that the wealthy city chap, Anson Newton, is also very attractive. Harley has plenty of backbone, however, and succeeds in winning her. They are married and move to the city where Harley gets a new and better job. The fact that the wealthy Mr. Newton and his socially prominent aunt, Mrs. Noxon, stroll across Phoebe's path puts an

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occasional crimp in Harley's happiness, but everything is forgotten when he and his wife are bending over the cradle of their first born son. Time slips along, and other babies come to the Jones family. No really serious misunderstanding comes until the social ambition bee gets into Phoebe's bonnet and makes such a loud buzzing that it lures her to leave her sick child and attend a dinner party given by the mighty Mrs. Noxon. Harley is half crazy with apprehension for his child and indignation at his wife, and accuses her of going to the dinner in order to meet Newton. Phoebe denies this, but goes to the dinner. The sick child calls for her, and Phoebe, suddenly brought to her senses, rushes home and quiets the little girl by rocking her in her arms. There is peace once more in the Jones house when the child is pronounced out of danger.

This story typifies a new departure in the annals of screencraft. The plot does not depend upon dramatic crises, for the element of conflict is so slight as to be almost imperceptible. The action, indeed, is narrative, but it is manipulated with such adroitness that it never drags. Not thrilling incidents or intense complications, but well-chosen little realistic touches compel the interest of the spectator as the story unfolds. A realistic story, based upon realistic characterization, this is a direct descendant of the one-reel comedies which made the Sidney Drews famous. It is *human* comedy that deals with the joys and sorrows of ordinary, every-day life. It is humorous, with a humor that is far removed from the humor of the screen farces. These, as a rule, have been utterly artificial, and consequently, have been failures. Rupert Hughes writes here the tale of the married life of two people as it is, and as the spectator knows it to be. But he writes it in such a way that it is intensely significant to an audience.

The technique is almost too intangible for analysis. The "triad" hovers on the brink of actuality, but never really materializes, for at no point is Newton energized into a formidable "antagonist." The triangle situation is felt, rather than seen. The climax of the plot is as simple as the other portions of it,—the mother's return to her sick child. Very few situations occur, which accounts partially for the "undramatic" nature of the picture,—if "undramatic" be used in the accepted meaning of the term as "lacking in conflict, suspense, and climax." However, the story is "dramatic" in a subtle, psychological way.

XXX. ("Ambition") is the most strongly marked situation, though it is interesting to note that it comes quite late in the action. XXXII. ("Mistaken Jealousy") is used to motivate XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"). The climactic situation is, of course, XXXIV ("Remorse").

It is not advantageous for the student who has not yet mastered screen technique to attempt to write any such highly-specialized type of photoplay as this. The "narrative" picture requires a master hand, or it will be woefully tiresome. It is precarious for a writer to dispense with dramatic structure to such an extent, unless he is thoroughly familiar with the mechanism of the screen play, in all of its many and various phases.

"THE AVALANCHE."

(Artcraft Production; starring Elsie Ferguson; based on the story by Gertrude Atherton; continuity by Ouida Bergere; directed by George Fitzmaurice.)

SYNOPSIS.

Helene has inherited a taste for gambling and her mother is determined that the daughter shall be raised in different environments. When the child becomes a young lady and escapes from the convent the mother sends her from Europe to New York City to become the ward of a respected friend. The young girl marries, but becomes lonesome when her husband is away on a long trip and visits a gambling house where she loses all her savings and pawns her jewels.

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Her mother had married again and had come to New York City. Her husband is the proprietor of this same gambling house and the mother is horrified to discover that the young woman pleading so dramatically to her husband for more time on her I. O. U.'s is her own daughter.

It is at this point that many of the very heavy dramatic moments occur. There are two tragedies and some intensely thrilling action.

When Helene discovers that the wife of the gambler is her mother and that she has made the supreme sacrifice to save her daughter she seeks her own husband, who has returned, and confesses her great loss at gambling, also telling him of the inherited trait which she knows has now disappeared entirely, washed by the blood of her mother and cleansed by her own bitter experience.

The first and most obvious comment to be made on this production is the fact that it involved a dual role, providing Miss Ferguson with opportunities for acting emotional roles. The star played both mother and daughter in the picture, and the meeting between them in the gambling den was genuine drama. The lack of rigorous unity will be observed, also, but it should be noted that the really dramatic part of the story was almost consecutive in time and took place in a narrow area. The preliminary action was scattered and diffuse, but it was allowable because it led to a striking climax. The story would have been more dramatic, however, if it had been more unified.

In the heroine's passion for gambling, we find a definite example of Situation XXII ("All Sacrificed for a Passion"). In this case the inceptive situation is rather implausible, for we are told that the heroine has inherited her taste for gambling. Gambling is not a hereditary vice, and in the original story Mrs. Atherton probably motivated this element by sounder psychology. But the necessity of translating ideas into definite, objective action required such a change in the photoplay. The theme has been used before, in similar gambling stories, and it is rather hackneyed. Only exceptional characterization and a strikingly novel plot will make such a story salable soon again.

The XXVIIth Situation ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One") plays a minor part in the story, when the mother finds her daughter in a predicament she had long tried to shield her from.

But by far the most important, and indeed the climactic situation, is the XXIst ("Self-Sacrifice for Kindred"), for the mother gives her life to save her child.

The element of "Pardon" enters into the story when the heroine pleads to be forgiven by her husband, and that of "Supplication" is apparent in her pleas to her mother's husband.

The tragic note in the story, the fact that the two most important situations are used in trite ways, the dual role, and its lack of unity, all combine to make it a bad example for the photoplaywright to imitate, but one from which he can learn a great deal. On the other hand, it was an excellent vehicle for Miss Ferguson, and its production was technically a thing of great beauty.

"BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME."

(Produced by Northwestern Film Corporation; story by William E. Wing; directed by John E. Maple.)

SYNOPSIS.

The Wolf, chief of an opposing band of Indians, seeks the hand of Kaweena. He is repulsed and demands that six of the bravest warriors shall battle with six of his braves for the hand of the girl. Big Elk, also in love with the girl, takes up the challenge. Big Elk is victorious. In revenge The Wolf declares war. Big Elk at the head of the warriors goes to battle. While they are gone The Wolf enters the village of Big Elk, scatters the old men and women and steals Kaweena. Big Elk takes up the chase. Kaweena escapes from The Wolf, who is later killed by Big Elk. Kaweena

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falls into the hands of the opposing tribe, and being considered crazy, she is held to be in touch with the great spirits. She is accused of poisoning the spring and is about to be burned to death when Big Elk goes to her rescue.

This story is in some respects a unique production, for not only is it an Indian story, but all the members of the cast are full-blooded Indians. The picture was directed with the aid of interpreters and is of value educationally because of its accuracy of detail. The story naturally is of secondary importance in such a case, and here we have a simple, direct and dramatic love story presented with no unnecessary complications and with characterization in keeping with the actors.

The story is based upon Situations XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior"), III ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"), IX ("Daring Enterprise"), X ("Abduction"), and II ("Deliverance"). The very wealth of situations leads to swift and interesting plot complications and provides a strong, though by no means novel, plot.

The story is, of course, a special case and there is virtually no demand for photo-plays that deal with Indian characters or Indian life. Years ago that subject was used very frequently, but it has been overdone and it no longer makes a wide popular appeal except as a novelty.

"BEHIND THE DOOR."

(Thomas H. Ince production; starring Hobart Bosworth; written by Gouverneur Morris; continuity by Luther Reed; directed by Irvin Willat.)

SYNOPSIS.

Oscar Krug, veteran seaman, established as taxidermist in a small town, secretly weds Alice Morse. He joins the U. S. Navy and is placed in command of a ship in the merchant marine. Alice, in the guise of a Red Cross nurse, boards her husband's vessel. It is torpedoed, sinks, Krug and his wife drift away in a boat. They are sighted by a German submarine, whose commander, Brandt, seizes the woman and leaves Krug to the mercy of the waves. He is picked up by an American craft and given command of another ship. He disables a German U-boat and captures Brandt, who does not recognize him. Brandt boastfully describes Alice's awful fate. Krug reveals himself and behind the locked door of his cabin tortures Brandt to death.

Whatever one may think of the theme of revenge and hate on which this story is founded, one cannot deny the dramatic power and effectiveness of the play. Whether it entertains or not, it certainly achieves the effect all drama strives for—to reach the heart and the mind of the spectator. There have been few stage or screen plays so well constructed dramatically that they have made a more convincing impression upon the beholder. Oscar Krug is a character with only one idea—Vengeance! He is never out of character, and every incident in the plot adds cumulatively to the climax, in which he literally skins his betrayer alive. The very wonderful suggestion, by means of shadows, of this climax in the actual production is an artistic accomplishment of rare excellence. The story is simple, direct and unified. There are no side issues or subplots, and every step of the plot leads closer to the thrilling and horrible climax. It is to be noted that the producer was too subtle to allow the climax to be simply terrifying; he does not show the tortured, lifeless man, but he suggests very clearly just what has happened. The action is restrained and slow in movement, but every gesture of the star means something and leads ever closer to the tremendous scene "behind the door." Disregarding the theme for the present, the play may be considered as a very unusual example of a powerful, but simple, story organized in a most dramatic way. Simply from the standpoint of technique it is a masterpiece of drama.

It should be observed, however, that the theme of vengeance is very carefully developed and that the central character is made wholly sympathetic throughout the story. We see him first as a kind of outcast among the people of a small town, the one thing in his life his love for Alice Morse. He is attacked viciously in the town

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and he is compelled to fight; in the early sequences we see him as a very strong, very admirable, and, to the girl, very gentle hero. The romance is carefully developed, and then—on the very eve of the fulfillment of the marriage, when it seems that happiness lies in store for them—his wife is stolen from him by a brute and driven to an awful fate. Then we are prepared for the idea of a terrible vengeance, for the character has our complete sympathy and we almost rise in our seats to help him seek out the brute. It will be seen that in no other way than by the careful development of romance and sympathy could the situation be used in all its terrifying grimness. And after the climax, from which we recoil in horror, the central character, broken in grief, again wins our sympathy, when he says, hopelessly, "But that doesn't bring *her* back—that doesn't bring her back!"

The situation is simply "Crime Pursued by Vengeance" (III), but it is perhaps the most dramatic use of that situation the screen has seen. In general it is a situation to be avoided, to be used only in a very unusual and different manner, but if you feel that you must employ the situation, endeavor to use it with the same economy and the same brilliant characterization as the author of "Behind the Door."

"REPUTATION."

(Universal-Jewel production; starring Priscilla Dean; story by Edwina Levin; continuity by Lucien Hubbard and Doris Schroder; directed by Stuart Paton.)

SYNOPSIS.

Fay McMillan is a frivolous, self-seeking woman who fights her way to prominence in the theatrical profession, and becomes known as the great Laura Figlan. Her daughter, Pauline, has grown to womanhood and is having a bitter struggle to obtain a livelihood on the stage. Each is unaware of the identity of the other, the mother residing in England, the daughter in America. It is when a telegram announces that Laura Figlan is unable to come over for an engagement, that the younger woman takes advantage of her resemblance to the famous star and hoodwinks the manager.

Unexpectedly, the real Laura Figlan arrives. The theatre is crowded, and the pseudo star is giving a bad performance because of her fear of being discovered as an impostor. The mother hides in a closet and kills a philanderer responsible for her downfall. She has her revenge for having her part stolen, since the masquerader is indicted for the crime. When the actress discovers the identity of her daughter, she commits suicide without revealing the relationship existing between them. Pauline finds happiness in her marriage to Jimmy Dorn, the hero press-agent.

This production deserves the attention of the student because it is a novel and vivid illustration of the principle of effective screen conflict. The conflict is centered in the rivalry—personal and professional—of mother and daughter: an alignment of characters which is inherently dramatic. Situation XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior") is used to excellent advantage, because the fact that the mother and the daughter are the rivals, endows it with a poignant, human quality,—the intensity of the struggle being far more keen than it could possibly have been, had this relationship not existed. Furthermore, the character contrast between the two actresses is brought into high relief, and the emotional apex of the action,—the self-sacrifice of the older woman for the younger,—is made more deeply tragic because of this bond. There is pathos in the spectacle of the dissipated, worldly woman proving herself to be,—in spite of all,—a mother. Such a climax gives an actress the opportunity to stir the hearts and minds of an audience, and leave upon them an indelible impression.

The action involves primarily Situation XIV ("Rivalry of Kinsmen"), VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), and Situation XXX ("Ambition"), which, to a considerable extent, actuates both mother and daughter, though there is a wide disparity between the motives and objectives of the two characters. "Erroneous Judgment," XXXIII, is used forcefully to inject suspense, which almost reaches the breaking-point, and is only relieved in the climax.

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Although in the construction of this plot, Situation XXXV ("Recovery of a Lost One"), which is extremely hackneyed, was resorted to to bring about the outcome, it serves merely in a minor capacity as a contributory situation, the logical cause leading to the crucial situation of the play,—XXI ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred"), which is splendidly handled in a virile, dramatic climax. For this reason, it does not weaken the plot, as it would with a less expert treatment.

The ending of the story tends toward the melodramatic, but the human characterization redeems it. Though the technique is not perfect in all details, it is on the whole, fairly sound. But the interest of the photoplay lies not so much in validity of plot mechanism, as in the characterization of the two leading roles. The mother-daughter *motif* is well worked out, the star playing both of the emotional parts in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

"DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE."

(Paramount-Artcraft production; starring John Barrymore; story of Robert Louis Stevenson; continuity by Clara Beranger; directed by John S. Robertson.)

SYNOPSIS.

Dr. Jekyll, a noble-hearted physician, devotes his time and talent to the charitable work of the hospital which he has founded in the city slums. He wins the devotion of his patients, especially the children. Shortly before he is to marry a charming young woman, his curiosity about the evil side of life is aroused when an acquaintance, a "man of the world," calls him a coward, accusing him of being afraid of vice and immorality.

After arduous experimentation, Dr. Jekyll succeeds in concocting a marvelous drug, the ingredients of which are known only to himself. Through its tremendous potency he is able to separate the good and the bad forces in his nature,—to become either the upright, handsome gentleman known as Dr. Jekyll, or Hyde, a grovelling, depraved wretch, who ruins the lives of unfortunate girls, and tramples underfoot a crippled child.

He becomes so addicted to the use of the drug, he assumes the role of Hyde more and more frequently, until he is wholly a victim of his baser self. Unable to marry, he makes up his mind to remain in the character of Hyde. Learning of the unexpected approach of his fiancée and some friends, he prepares to transform himself once more into Jekyll, but finds, to his dismay, that he has used up his supply of one of the compounds. He dispatches the servant for more, but his fiancée arrives before the servant's return. Impelled by the lust which has mastered his soul, he advances toward her, but the overwhelming realization of the depths to which he has fallen checks him, and he commits suicide. As he dies the wonted metamorphosis takes place automatically: his sweetheart and friends look upon the form and face of Dr. Jekyll.

The production of this Stevenson classic possesses a powerful, human appeal, because it is one of the finest examples of the spiritual conflict between good and evil in every man, than which there is no greater dramatic material.

The plot is based upon a very unusual treatment of Situation XXIV ("Rivalry of a Superior and an Inferior") for here the rivalry takes place within a personality: the struggle is between the lower nature and the higher nature, the goal being the happiness of the character. As the action of the story develops, the first prominent situation that occurs is XVII B (1), ("Fatal Imprudence"), when Jekyll enters upon his dangerous experiments with the drug. Situation XXII ("All Sacrificed for a Passion") follows, the nobility of Jekyll being submerged in the vice of Hyde. Situation XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") plays a minor part before the introduction of XXXIV ("Remorse"), which leads directly to the climax, the suicide of the leading character.

It would be difficult to select any theme of more vital significance and interest to the average spectator than the one exemplified in this production. The novel use that

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is made of the dual role is interesting from the dramatic standpoint, and, furthermore, it serves to emphasize the allegorical meaning of the story in a vivid, unmistakeable way. Through the miraculous feats of photography, the hideous, crouching Hyde seems actually to *fade into* the dignified Jekyll, and vice versa. In each there is the subtle consciousness of the other; they are distinct, and yet indissolubly allied. In no better way than by using the dual role could the significance of the unified diversity of the higher and lower natures of man, be impressed upon the mind of the spectator. The intrinsic meaning of the story demanded that one actor play both Jekyll and Hyde, for Jekyll and Hyde *are* one and the same man.

Much care must be exercised in selecting the *motif* of the dual role. Not only is it time-worn, but it is apt to be implausible as well, unless it is handled with consummate skill. Very often an author will have two characters resemble each other to such a degree that the star may be presented as both. This, at best, divides the interest, and, though there are instances where it has been treated effectively, ordinarily it is clumsy and obvious. The construction of your story will be more sound, if one actor plays a character who changes his identity. This, of course, resolves itself into the motivation of "disguise," which is hackneyed, and should be studiously avoided unless it is possible to endow it with novelty.

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" may be considered a criterion, not only of the finest, most apposite use of the dual role, but also of a virile dramatic plot built upon a theme that has a universal appeal.

"EARTHBOUND."

(Goldwyn production; all-star cast; story by Basil King; directed by T. Hayes Hunter.)

SYNOPSIS.

Since their college days, Desborough and Rittenshaw have pretended to live by the creed, "No God, no sin, no future life." To this Breck, an author, refuses to subscribe, though the three are intimate friends of long standing. A cloud on their relationship which rapidly assumes tragic proportions, is the intimacy between Desborough and the beautiful wife of Rittenshaw. The latter first has his eyes opened by the suffering wife of Desborough. He waits until he has definite proofs, then kills Desborough on sight at their club.

Rittenshaw offers no defense at his trial, refusing to incriminate his wife. The earthbound spirit of Desborough, tortured by full realization of his duplicity, finds it difficult to communicate with his own deceived wife, but he goes to Daisy, the wife of Rittenshaw, and haunts her conscience until she makes her way to the courtroom and testifies to her own fault. By the unwritten law, Rittenshaw is pronounced "not guilty," but his release brings no great happiness.

Desborough haunts those he has caused to suffer until he works through their finer sentiments to restore love and happiness. His last effort to secure the forgiveness of his wife is the more touching that she freely pardons him. Then his tortured soul is finally released from earthly trammels, and the spirit of kindness and consideration left behind by his efforts reunites Rittenshaw and his erring wife.

The powerful premise in this picture is that each human being is on earth for a definite purpose, which must be worked out in life or after the death of the body, before the soul can be free to ascend to its evolution. The torture to which the erring soul is subjected is a spiritual one of unrelenting conscience. Death does not release the soul of a man who has destroyed the happiness of others—he must remain "earthbound" until forgiven by his victims. As a conception of mystical significance, with fantasy filling every interstice of the play, with the supernatural crossing the border line of the natural, actors living in contact with the specter of an actor, success depends greatly upon skilled workmanship, which is given its highest opportunity through photodramas of this type.

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From a purely technical point of view "Earthbound" bears the clear stamp of constructive ability, of unity of effort on the part of all engaged in the production, which inevitably results in a satisfying totality of effect. Because of the skilful handling of the subject matter, the intent interest of the spectator is held, in spite of the moralizing in the subtitling, which seems to be a more or less necessary evil.

The theme is what endows the story with its tremendous import. Whether the onlooker's spiritualistic views coincide with the author's, or not, the theme stimulates thought and conjecture,—it makes him *think*.

The basic situation of practically all of the action is just the old "triangle" situation, dignified and made morally significant through the theme, stripped of which the plot resolves itself into a thoroughly stereotyped mould,—expressed in terse terms: One man loves another man's wife, and the husband shoots him; at the trial of the murderer, the wife confesses her share of the guilt. This illustrates that the dramatic structure serves merely as the embodiment of the theme, or "motivating idea," of the picture.

The element of conflict here is especially unique. Taking its rise in the illicit love of Desborough and Daisy, it continues after the death of Desborough increasing in intensity until it culminates in the climax, Daisy's confession. Perhaps the most interesting phase of it lies in the fact that, after Desborough has died, the basis of the conflict is shifted; formerly, it was the joint opposition of Daisy and Desborough, directed against Rittenshaw; afterward, Desborough's struggle against Daisy, in behalf of Rittenshaw. Through a considerable portion of the action, then, the clash of wills is between the dead Desborough, on the one hand, and the living characters, on the other, between the natural and the supernatural. The theme demands such a conflict, and, in its subtle aspect, is a novel conception of dramatic opposition.

The action begins with XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love"); XVII ("Fatal Imprudence"); and XXII ("All Sacrificed for a Passion"), all three of which are causal, resulting in XV ("Murderous Adultery"). The concluding situation of note is XXXIV ("Remorse"), which is used very forcefully. The fact that Daisy's confession is motivated by super-natural pressure gives a new "twist" to the time-worn last minute confession of the guilty.

It is easily understood that a photodrama as subtle, as intangible as this, is far more difficult to write convincingly and adequately, than the story which has its basis in realism. Producers will not take the risk involved in screening such a radical type of play, unless the material possesses the maximum amount of "drama."

"FOOTLIGHTS."

(Paramount production; starring Elsie Ferguson; story by Rita Weiman; continuity by Josephine Lovett; directed by John S. Robertson.)

SYNOPSIS

A New England girl, aided and abetted by her grandmother, goes on the stage to become, after hard work, a famous star, known to the public as Lisa Parsinova, a temperamental Russian with a scandalous past and a record of many amours. The actress is under the necessity of keeping her true identity from being known since it would ruin her professional reputation. However, her maid learning that "Lisa Parsinova" is really "Lizzie Parsons," blackmails her mistress and finally sells the information to the actress' lover. About this time the actress decides that she will again become "Lizzie Parsons" and arranges to have "Lisa Parsinova" be accepted as drowned by going out in a row boat alone and then disappearing. The plan works so far as the public is concerned, but the lover, armed with the information the maid has sold him, overtakes her on the way to the old New England home. She discovers he is not in love with the temperamental actress, as she thought, but with her true self, and so they find happiness.

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This is one of the best stories of the stage which has been produced on the screen. There is a directness, a simplicity about it that is refreshing. It deals with theatrical life authentically and realistically. It is, consequently, convincing, whereas many of the preceding plays composed of similar subject matter have been weak, because they exaggerated certain salient features of life behind the footlights.

In an analysis of the technique, the absence of the stereotyped "villain" is noteworthy, and comes as a relief to the discriminating spectator. Instead of a leering, ubiquitous rascal who "pursues" the heroine and succeeds in compromising her, there is only a mischievous, intriguing maid for the antagonist. Although, in fact, she can hardly be classed as "unsympathetic" since it is through her machinations that the lover comes to learn of the true woman who is masquerading as the actress. Here is proof conclusive that a writer may dispense with "villains" and still thoroughly entertain his audience from the beginning of the picture to the end.

The leading character has charm and sincerity. She is a heroine who "does things." In her desire to make a place for herself in the world, to forge ahead and turn her talent and her vivid personality to good account, she is expressing the idealism and the energy of youth, and she sweeps her audience along with her, appealing to emotions that they have in common with her. The star is afforded an opportunity for fine character contrasts in enacting the two utterly diverse roles,—that of the simple New England girl, and that of the extravagant, moody Russian. Here is an instance where the dual role *motif* is used advantageously. The rather hackneyed trick of "disguise" is dealt with differently and entertainingly. The necessity for "Lizzie" to live up to the pretensions and the "dark, passionate past" of "Lisa" is excellent comedy material, allowing for many humorous complications. The justification for the "disguise" here, lies in the fact that it is convincingly motivated: "Lizzie" is really forced to adopt some such measure, and her doing so is made thoroughly logical. Furthermore, the "disguise" gives rise to an element of well-drawn mental conflict: the conflict between the illustrious "Lisa" who wants a career above all things, and the plain little "Lizzie" who wants a husband and a home.

The first situation of prominence in this dramatic structure, is, of course XXX ("Ambition"), leading logically into IX ("Daring Enterprise") at the point where Lizzie makes her decision to enter upon an entirely new and hazardous mode of living. XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") plays a major part, and the climax is based upon a good use of XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"). The action never touches on the tragic, or the melodramatic, the situations being so used that the story is a simple one, told in a simple way. The characters are real, thinking and acting as people do think and act. The picture appeals to the average spectator because it is essentially human.

"BITS OF LIFE."

(Marshall Neilan production; all-star cast; directed by Marshall Neilan.)

SYNOPSIS

This feature consists of four distinct stories, the first three of which are superficial but smartly written bits of life, and have appeared in popular fiction magazines. The last story was written by Mr. Neilan himself, and is a clever satire on the old "Prisoner of Zenda" type of tale. The stories are prefaced by the statement of the producer that the difficulty of finding good scenarios forced him to make a program of four short plots.

The opening story, "The Bad Samaritan," deals with the experiences of a crook, who, after having gained wealth and position has been able continually to elude the detectives. A pal, just released from the penitentiary, wishes to borrow some money. The crook undertakes to show him how easily it may be obtained. As they walk along in a quiet park, the crook stops a boy who is running and casting an occasional glance behind him. When the crook demands the wallet the boy has just stolen, much to the surprise of the friend, it is forthcoming. The crook tells the corner policeman to

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follow the boy. Later, in a gambling establishment, the crook pays small sums for a watch and a ring to the owners, who pretend to think them of little value, but who must have money for their gambling debts. Just after the crook has given his pal the money he wanted, he sees a man lying unconscious. When he assists him, the detective appears and the man accuses the crook of fleecing him. The detective's search reveals the wallet, the watch, and the ring of which the man had been robbed earlier in the day before he was left unconscious behind the fence where the crook found him.

"The Man Who Heard Everything" comes next. It is about a barber who loves his wife and, in spite of his deafness, finds life very pleasant. One day seeing a device through which he might be able to hear, he saves his money and buys one. When he uses it the first time, he is horrified to hear that a pretty little girl he has admired, is being arrested. He goes home expecting to hear his wife say, "I love you," and instead hears her talking about the stinginess of her husband, as well as making an engagement over the phone with another man. He goes out into the garden, seizes a big stone, and smashes the instrument to pieces.

"Hop" is the third number. The leading character is a young Chinaman, who has seen his father throw his three baby sisters into the river because they were not boys. On running away from home and coming to San Francisco, the boy grows into a wealthy merchant and operator of an opium den. He desires a young, educated Chinese girl, an operator for the telephone company. The missionary clergyman agrees to his taking the girl, if he will give up his opium den. He consents, and brings a fake bill of sale when he comes for the girl. A daughter is born to them. The Chinaman, with his desire for sons to worship at his tomb, beats his wife most unmercifully and leaves her in great anger. Another Chinese girl, who also has been raised at the mission, brings the little wife a crucifix and nails it to the wall. Blood seems to pour from the side of the Christ. On investigation, it is found that the nail had penetrated the skull of the Chinaman, lying in an opium stupor on the other side of the wall.

In the last story, a young man on a golf course sees a beautiful girl. That night at the hotel, she is seated at a table near his. Presently a man whom the girl apparently dislikes, addresses her as "Princess" and forces her to leave with him. The young man follows, sees the man make love to her, and then leave her. He goes to the Princess and begs to be of assistance to her. Just as she finally agrees to fly with him, they are surrounded by East Indians and, at the command of the man whom the Princess disliked, these servants rush upon him with a huge knife, and appear to be disembowelling him, when the scene changes and the young man finds himself in an operating chair, the Princess beside him in uniform, and the hated man on the other side, with a tooth in his forceps.

In this novel undertaking, Mr. Neilan departs wholly from convention. With a satire that is too playful, too humorous to be offensive, he "lets his audience in" on certain problems of his profession. With a truly delightful, personal appeal, he confides in them about the difficulties involved in the selection of screen material.

Each of the four plots build up to one dramatic crisis. There is only one situation of any importance in the first: the situation upon which the whole idea of the story is based, viz.—XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"). This is not weakened by superimposing upon it a "happy ending." And yet, with subtle irony, "poetic justice" is meted out to the nonchalant crook, by the remorseless hand of Fate. The entire construction of the story depends upon coincidence, of course, which is excusable in the present instance, because without the coincidence, there would be no story. Moreover, the light, satirical vein in which it is written allows for an artificial basis, such as it has.

The fundamental situation in the next story is XXVII ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One") in a simple, modified form. The discovery is brought about in

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such a novel way that the interest is held throughout. There is a humanness, a pathos in the figure of the idealistic barber that colors the denouement with heartfelt appeal.

Of the four, "Hop" is, of course, the most dramatic. Into this plot are crowded several powerful situations: VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior"), XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"), and, especially, the climactic situation, XIX ("Slaying of a Kinsman Unrecognized"), so qualified that the death depends upon the inadvertent action of a character, who is unconscious of the murder she is committing. Here, again, coincidence is used for motivation.

The last story contains the usual melodramatic situations, which culminate in a humorous application of Situation II ("Deliverance"), the "dream" ending. In a serious play, the "dream" should be studiously avoided, as it is not only hackneyed, but it is thoroughly obvious and undramatic as well. But in parody, such as this is, it comes as a laughable denouement, bringing out strongly, in conclusion, the satire of the story.

The idea that an entertaining photoplay may be composed of distinct, component plots contains fascinating possibilities. Stories, developing the various phases of some underlying theme, might be combined in such a treatment. A series of episodes might be compiled and unified in one picture to emphasize certain angles of a dramatic premise. The advanced student, who understands photoplay technique, and will not make the mistake of writing episodic *narrative*, rather than episodic *drama*, may find inspiration in the study of this production, as well as food for his creative imagination.

"THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE."

(Metro production; all-star cast; adapted from the novel of Vicente Blasco-Ibanez, by June Mathis; directed by Rex Ingram.)

SYNOPSIS

While in no sense a prologue, the opening scenes of the story in South America prepare the way for the tragic drama which is enacted later in Paris and on the Marne. Madariaga, the Centaur, the enormously rich old cattle herder of Argentina, lusty and lustful, whose daughters have married outside of their own nationality, is the undisputed ruler of his broad acres and army of servants. He hates his German son-in-law. Toward his younger daughter's French husband he has an entirely different feeling. But the German is the father of three sturdy sons, while the Frenchman's wife has only presented him with a daughter. Madariaga does not relish leaving his vast estate to Karl Von Hartrott's sons. When Julio Desnoyers is born, the old Argentinian is so overjoyed that he embraces Marcelo, the boy's father. Until the hour of his death, the old Centaur lavishes all his affection upon Julio and takes him with him on wild debauches in the towns, as soon as he is old enough to accompany his grandfather.

At old Madariaga's death, the estate is divided and all of his family go to Europe to live, the Von Hartrotts in Germany and the Desnoyers in Paris. Here Julio's father sets up an expensive establishment and buys a castle on the Marne, and becomes a collector of costly antiques. Julio, true to his training by his grandfather, begins a gay life and opens a studio where he paints pictures and entertains his friends and his models.

One of his guests is Marguerite Laurier, the youthful wife of the elderly Monsieur Laurier. Julio falls desperately in love with her and Marguerite returns his passion. Her husband discovers what is going on, and drives his wife from his home. Then comes the outbreak of the war and Laurier enlists at once, but Julio still continues his painting and his gay life. The sight of Marguerite putting on the garb of a Red Cross nurse does not arouse him, but when he sees her attending a blind soldier and recognizes the man as her husband, he commences to feel the call of war. Enlisting at last, he is sent to the front.

Meantime his father, learning of the advance of the Germans toward Paris, goes to his estate on the Marne, only to be captured by German soldiers and have his castle

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turned into the headquarters of the officer in command, Von Hartrott being one of the lieutenant-colonel's staff.

Julio and his eldest cousin meet at night in a ditch between the lines. Both have been sent on dangerous missions. They recognize each other, but the game of war must be played to the bitter end. Both fire at close range and fall dead, side by side. Marguerite determines to stay with her husband before she learns of Julio's death, the blind man having forgiven her. Later the father and mother of Julio meet a stranger in the graveyard who leads them to their boy's grave. "You knew him?" they ask. "I knew them all," replies the stranger, pointing to the thousands of graves. The symbolism is unmistakable.

As compelling, sincere, beautiful, as Blasco-Ibanez' literary classic, this screen classic stands out,—a splendid exponent of the cinematic art. It is a powerful story, powerfully delineated. The action runs the whole gamut of the human emotions from bitterest tragedy to lightest satire and most fantastic humor.

The story's dramatic quality makes itself felt early,—in the initial situations of the plot, where the seeds of hatred and of potential conflict are sown between the two sons-in-law of Madariaga. Steadily throughout the action, this dramatic force increases its momentum until it culminates in the soul-stirring encounter of the two youths—the son of the German, and the son of the Frenchman, on the field of battle. This racial antagonism, which is developed in a sound, psychological way, is what gives the story its epic import.

The theme: the upward struggle of humanity, is vivified and made concrete through the symbolism. The four horsemen, enemies of mankind,—Pestilence, Famine, War, and Death, on their gigantic chargers, trample over the trivial concerns of mortals, strewing disaster and destruction in their wake. The idealism of a suffering world is symbolized in the character of the quiet, thoughtful Russian, the philosopher who speaks of peace and brother-love. He is "the stranger" that comes forth to meet the bereaved parents, the Christ who "knew them all."

The tremendous situation VI ("Disaster"), is, patently, the foundation of this plot. VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune") is used with great pathos when the bewildered Desnoyers is made a prisoner in his own castle. IX ("Daring Enterprise") enters at several points in connection with the war incidents. Upon XIII ("Enmity of Kinsmen") is based the climax. XX ("Self-sacrifice for an Ideal") motivates the action of several of the characters. The love element brings XXII ("All Sacrificed for a Passion") into play. The tragedy of the story is expressed through XXIII ("Necessity of Sacrificing Loved Ones") which leads inevitably into XXXVI ("Loss of Loved Ones"). The action is dramatic from the beginning to the end.

"The Four Horsemen" is a screen play that deserves study and re-study. The structure is not weakened but rather strengthened by the lapse of time, for it would be impossible to show the onward sweep of a world cataclysm more briefly, and, at the same time, as convincingly. The dramatic construction is good; the plot progresses logically to a logical termination. The characterizations cannot be improved upon. The characters, while typifying certain racial proclivities, are distinct individuals, with personalities of their own. Such material as the infidelity of the heroine, Marguerite, might be condemned because of censorship regulations, in a story less strong than this. Here, the sin of the young lovers is purified through suffering, and idealistic sacrifice. The boy turns bravely to face death, the girl as bravely to face duty. The ending is tragic, and rightly so: it is an ending that grows out of the story itself. The terrible devastation is unforgettable. But there is hope and optimism too,—in the wistful, loving face of "the stranger."

As long as the World War is remembered, it is safe to prophesy that this faithful screen version of it will endure.

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"CAROLYN OF THE CORNERS."

(Produced by Anderson-Brunton; released by Pathé; starring Bessie Love; story by Ruth Belmore Endicott; continuity by Frank S. Beresford; directed by Robert Thornby.)

SYNOPSIS.

Carolyn May Cameron, after her parents have been reported lost at sea, is sent to live with her uncle, Joe Stagg, the storekeeper of a little village in Maine. Stagg is a bachelor, having quarreled years before with the woman he loved, Amanda Parlow. "Aunt Rose" is his housekeeper. Stagg doesn't understand the little girl who enters his life along with her big dog, Prince, but in time, guided by Aunt Rose, he learns to love her and to find companionship in her. Carolyn enjoys the days in the little village and attends the little school with the other children. And it is mainly through her efforts that the ancient quarrel between Stagg and Amanda is smoothed over, at least in some small measure.

When spring comes Amanda takes Carolyn into an old lumber camp, there to visit one of her friends who is bedridden with rheumatism. While they are there, a forest fire breaks out and Carolyn and the women are trapped in the flames. They take refuge in the spring and wait until Stagg arrives to the rescue. This element of danger proves the last straw which breaks down the reserve between Amanda and Stagg and past quarrels are forgotten. Aunt Rose suggests that the newly-married couple will not be wanting company any more, so Carolyn takes her last money and buys a ticket to New York, returning to the still vacant Harlem flat of her parents.

Amanda and Stagg follow, of course—having postponed their honeymoon to Niagara Falls. The next morning they find her crying her eyes out for her father and mother. And then, wonder of wonders, her parents enter. They had been saved from the sinking vessel and had taken refuge on a distant island and had only now reached civilization again. So Carolyn is once more happy.

This story serves very well to illustrate two situations which we have already considered as rather difficult, XXXV and XXXVI, ("The Recovery and the Loss of Loved Ones"). In Carolyn's loss of her parents, we have a very good example of the use of that situation as the beginning of a story. She then "falls prey to cruelty and misfortune" in a mild and somewhat amusing way. Situation XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), is used in the relations between Stagg and Amanda. The danger that threatens Amanda and Carolyn in the fire is dependent upon an accident, and is very timeworn. But it gives rise to an effective dramatic situation in Stagg's rescue of them, which involves IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), and II, ("Deliverance"). Finally, Situation XXXV, brings the story to a pleasing and surprising, though somewhat implausible, conclusion. The fact that ships were being torpedoed at the time the picture was produced partially justifies the use of this ending, and in its human appeal it has the effect of sending the audience home satisfied.

Aside from the slight dependence upon accidents, this story is human and dramatic, and the characterizations are in excellent contrast. It might therefore be considered as an eighty per cent. photoplay. The characterization happened to be convincing enough to carry the weak links in the plot chain, and the skill of production helped to make the fortuitous happenings plausible. The author, however, might have made it a much stronger story by careful analysis and more thorough revision.

"COMMON CLAY."

(Produced by Astra; starring Fannie Ward; from the stage play by Cleves Kinkhead; continuity by Ouida Bergere; directed by George Fitzmaurice.)

SYNOPSIS.

Contrasting her surroundings of sordidness and poverty with the constant spectacle of affluence she sees all around her, Ellen Neal, a department store worker, becomes dissatisfied. Jennie Peters, once a co-worker in the store and now a cabaret

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singer, induces her to visit a cabaret with other of her friends. Arthur Coakley, a young waster, attacks her, but before harm is done, the police raid the place. Subsequently, Ellen decides to quit the gay life and secures a position as maid in the Fullerton household. Coakley is well received in this family, but his advances toward Ellen are regularly repulsed.

Before long, Ellen finds herself very much in love with young Hugh Fullerton, and before he departs for war she gives herself to him. His haughty mother intercepts all his letters to her, and after a time Ellen is obliged to leave her position to care for her child. Mrs. Neal eventually persuades her to go to the Fullertons and demand her rights. Fullerton will not believe her story, so she hires an attorney. Judge Filson, an old friend of the Fullertons, takes their case. During the preliminary and private hearing, it develops that Mrs. Neal is not Ellen's mother; that she had brought her up after her own mother had committed suicide over a case similar to Ellen's. When Mrs. Neal mentions the woman's name, Judge Filson realizes that he is the man; Ellen's father.

He takes charge of the girl, and by the time that Hugh returns, has made her his daughter in the manner as well as in the name. Hugh is disconsolate over the absence of the girl and vows to find her, despite his parents' protests. And when at last Judge Filson arranges a meeting between his daughter and Hugh, happiness comes for both of the young people.

This story starts with Situation XXX, ("Ambition"), and the heroine, as in another example we have considered, then "falls prey to cruelty and misfortune," (Situation VII), and is "delivered" by the hero (II). The situations giving real strength and vitality to the story are, however, XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), XXI, ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred"), and XXXV, ("Recovery of a Lost One"). To a degree Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), is also used, in the Fullertons' distrust of Ellen.

The idea of lovers being estranged by parental opposition, with one of the parents intercepting the letters, is, of course, very hackneyed, and it is allowable in this case only because it is relatively unimportant and because the wartime condition and the characters make it plausible.

The distinction and novelty of this story, as well as its dramatic strength, lies in the effective use of Situation XXI, in two definite and consecutive incidents. At the moment of highest tension, Judge Filson suddenly realizes that Ellen is his daughter, and that she is willing to make a supreme sacrifice, as her mother did before her, for the sake of the man she loves. This is a very effective, though rather accidental, bit of drama. It is made plausible early in the story by the subtle suggestion of some kind of an attraction between Ellen and Judge Filson. The theme of the story involves rather a delicate subject, in the relations between Hugh and Ellen, but since both of the characters are noble and appealing, and since they are deeply in love, the average spectator is neither shocked nor appalled by their illicit affair. Love and sympathy have a way of justifying almost everything, but there is no reason for dealing with themes of this kind merely because of their supposed appeal to certain audiences.

"THE CRAVING."

(Produced by Universal; starring Francis Ford; story and continuity by Francis Ford; directed by Francis Ford and Jack Ford.)

SYNOPSIS.

Carroll Wayles, a scientist, has developed a formula for a powerful explosive. He is particularly careful of it, as it gives promise of proving of value to his government. There arrives in America Ala Kasarib, a scientist from East India, anxious to get possession of the formula for his own selfish ends. With him is Beulah, an English girl, whose father, a British army officer, left her in charge of Ala Kasarib

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when he died. *Ala Kasarib* makes a point of cultivating *Wayles'* acquaintance and finds this an easy task indeed, when he discovers the American's affection for his ward.

One day *Ala Kasarib* invites *Wayles* to take a drink, but is refused. *Wayles* then tells the East Indian that he once was a victim of alcohol and only by the utmost force of will did he raise himself from the gutter, where it had laid him. In a series of graphic descriptions he makes this point clear to his auditor.

Unable to secure possession of the formula, *Ala Kasarib* determines to conquer *Wayles* through a battle of wills. In his laboratory he sets to work on him, and a terrific struggle ensues between the minds of the two men—a struggle as fierce as any physical combat could possibly be. *Wayles* is defeated and before he has the opportunity to regain himself, *Ala Kasarib* has made off with the precious formula. *Wayles* then loses all control of himself, takes to drinking and finally, as a means of regeneration, reaches the battlefields of Europe. Afterwards when he regains his old self and realizes what has happened, he goes to *Ala Kasarib* and a fight takes place. The East Indian is killed by the explosion of the material prepared from the formula. His self-respect restored, *Wayles* then feels free to ask *Beulah* to become his wife.

This story is an interesting example of Situations XII ("Obtaining"), XXII ("All Sacrificed for a Passion"), and III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"). It involves a number of plot elements that are distinctly timeworn, especially the desire of one character to secure the formula and his theft of it, and the purely extraneous regeneration of the leading character on the battlefields of Europe, which destroys the unity of the story and takes it into a sphere of conflict utterly foreign to the conflict of wills on which it is based. In the use of recoil at the end of the story, when the East Indian is killed by the very explosive the formula of which he tried to steal, there is a rather melodramatic and implausible element. If the story could have been maintained on the genuinely dramatic plane of the conflict of wills between the two men, it would indeed have been a very strong and convincing story.

It will be observed, however, that the uninteresting and undramatic technicalities of the story are kept in the background and that the human drama is emphasized. Many writers have undertaken similar themes, and have made the error of allowing technical and scientific backgrounds to become a vital part of the story. The audience wants first of all to be entertained, and you must deal with the common language of the emotions. Technical backgrounds are rarely of pictorial interest, and they detract from the human interest of stories.

"CROOK OF DREAMS."

(Produced by World; starring Louise Huff; story by Forest Halsey; continuity by George D. Proctor; directed by Oscar Apfel.)

SYNOPSIS.

Constance's life with the low family on the East Side, with whom she lives, is far from happy. *Sam*, her brother, is a crook, her mother is a receiver of stolen goods, while *Pete*, an old man who lives with them, though he has a kindly feeling toward *Constance*, is also of the crook gentry. One day the police raid the place and while *Constance* and *Sam* escape, the others are captured and cast in jail. *Sam*, acting on a suggestion previously dropped by *Pete*, tries to pass *Constance* off as *Constance Waldron*, a long missing daughter of a wealthy widow, whose mental state is growing serious because of this loss. *Mrs. Waldron's* companion sees through the deception immediately, but takes *Constance* home with her, nevertheless, as the mother is near insanity.

Constance acts like a tonic on *Mrs. Waldron's* nerves and before long she is living happily again. *Charles Hadwin*, a young lawyer, falls in love with *Constance*, and she with him. However, in time, *Mrs. Waldron's* companion, *Laura Campbell*, grows jealous of the riches showered on *Constance* and tells her that she has really

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stolen them all from the real heir. And so Constance lives in a continual state of fear. In time, Pete and the old woman are released from the jail. Sam brings the woman to Constance, intending to blackmail her, but instead, Mrs. Waldron recognizes the woman as her nurse-maid of years ago, the one who stole her baby. This is the last bit of evidence that proves Constance is the real Constance Waldron, and so all ends happily for the "little Crook."

In "Crook of Dreams" the star is provided with a very appealing role, for she is shown in the very beginning of the story in Situation VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty and Misfortune"). The story is another example of Situations XXXV and XXXVI, and the XXXVIth is in this case a close approach to Situation XVI ("Madness"). Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), plays an important part in the story, as in most comedy dramas, and to a degree we have the element of rivalry between a superior and an inferior, in the relations between Constance and Laura. While all of the separate plot elements are in themselves timeworn, the author had devised a story full of suspense and human interest. The fact that it is treated as a comedy drama makes many otherwise implausible and trite elements allowable. If, for example, the reunion between Mrs. Waldron and Constance had been simply the simultaneous cry of recognition: "My mother!" "My Child!", it would have been commonplace drama. The comedic contrasts of character, together with the poignance of Constance's affection for her unknown mother, constitute entertainment of a high order. In this case, as usually with comedy drama, the treatment and the characterization is more important than the situational basis of the play. There is, of course, an element of chance in the fact that the old woman had been Mrs. Waldron's nurse-maid, but this is plausibly motivated by the arrest of the old woman and the ignorance of Sam concerning the real identity of the heroine.

The story is a good example of old material used in an effective manner, and should be studied as such. It will be worth while for the photoplaywright to practice the construction of a story dealing with similar situations, working it out in an entirely different but equally effective way.

"THE CONQUERING POWER."

(Metro production; all-star cast; story by Honore Balzac; continuity by June Mathis; directed by Rex Ingram.)

SYNOPSIS.

Balzac's well-known story, "Eugenie Grandet," from which the scenarist derived the material for the photoplay, "The Conquering Power," deals with the romance of two young people of France, Eugenie and her cousin, Charles. The girl's stepfather, Pere Grandet, is a miser, who is desirous of sacrificing even the dreams of youth to his god, wealth. He demands that Eugenie become betrothed to an unattractive, dapper gentleman, the son of a rich notary. To obtain his ends, he intercepts the letters of the lovers, and informs the boy that Eugenie is to wed another. But his greed brings ruin upon him, for it drives him insane. His death releases Eugenie from the odious engagement. As she wanders into the garden, grieving for Charles, Fate brings him back, the misunderstandings are cleared up, and they are joyfully reunited.

Upon this slender plot thread, Mr. Ingram has built a distinctive photoplay, in which heart interest and incident predominate. There are no dramatic climaxes, and very slight conflict and suspense, but, nevertheless, the action never drags, because the characterization is so remarkable. No attempt is made to embellish with "padding" and elaborate detail the very simple romance. The lack of intense situations is made up for by the consummate skill with which all the characters—principal and subordinate—are endowed with real personality.

Forward-looking producers are coming to recognize the strong tendency which is manifesting itself in the cinematic art, toward human, satisfying characterization.

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It has become, indeed, one of the primary requisites of the photoplay. A story that is purely narrative may be redeemed from becoming monotonous through characterization. Originality in the selection and the delineation of characters often may insure the success of a picture that otherwise would be flat and insipid.

The outstanding figure in this excellent cast is Pere Grandet, whose masterly acting does justice to Balzac's masterly characterization. Perhaps the most striking scenes in the play are those in which the grovelling miser pays homage to his deity, his hoard of golden coins, the hallucinations of his crazed imagination eventually culminating in bringing about his death.

The smirking, inane prospective son-in-law, the crafty notary, Cruchot, and the others who gather at the house of Grandet to witness the betrothal of Eugenie, are drawn with telling strokes, the details of costumes and manners being practically perfect. They are living individuals that one does not readily forget.

Eugenie herself is gracious, lovely, wistful. Charles is impetuous, generous, manly. The beauty of their love story lies chiefly in its simplicity.

A prominent situation in the action is XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love"), form D 1, which, it must be admitted, is handled in a purely conventional way. The opposition of parents to a match is exceedingly trite. However, in this instance, it is redeemed from mediocrity by virtue of the excellent characterization. VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune") is a contributory situation in combination with XXXII ("Mistaken Jealousy") which is duplicated, being used as motive for both Eugenie and Charles, and, as the logical result of XXXII, XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"), which gives rise to momentary suspense just preceding the climax. Perhaps, though, the strongest situation, and the one which does not concern the young lovers, except indirectly, is situation XXII, ("All Sacrificed for a Passion"). For upon this the whole powerful characterization of the miser is built.

"THE CYCLONE."

(Fox Production; starring Tom Mix; story by Col. Tod Hunter Marigold; continuity by J. Anthony Roach; directed by Cliff Smith.)

SYNOPSIS.

Sergeant Tim Ryerson, of the Northwest Mounted Police, is commissioned to round up a gang of smugglers. The man who was sent out before him met his death. Tim makes his headquarters at the Sturgis ranch and has happy moments with Sylvia Sturgis to whom he is engaged. He becomes suspicious of the ranch foreman, Baird, and catches him smuggling Chinamen in with the cattle. Baird escapes and, fleeing to the Sturgis ranch, attacks Sturgis and Sylvia. Tim arrives on the scene, but Baird leaves him for dead and runs away with Sylvia. When he regains consciousness, Tim locates Baird at a certain Chinaman's headquarters. He jumps his horse through a skylight and rounds up Baird and the other smugglers as well as rescuing Sylvia. Baird receives his just deserts, and Sylvia and Tim are left to their love-making.

The value of this production as an entertaining photoplay does not depend upon the plot of the story, which is basically trite, but upon the unusual treatment and especially the development of thrilling stunts of horsemanship for the star to perform. It is a simple and convenient plot on which to build Tom Mix's unusual tricks. The basic situation, as in many Western and Northwestern melodramas, is "Abduction," (X), with which is combined, as in practically all stories of the Northwest Mounted Police, "Crime Pursued by Vengeance," (III), in the professional pursuit of criminals. It is of value as an example of a timeworn and hackneyed plot which was made thrilling and entertaining by the invention of a number of unusual feats of heroism. One forgets the simplicity and triteness of the plot in marvelling at the star's agility.

But most beginning writers, in selecting the exhausted locale of the Northwest and in writing of the Mounted Police, tell just as simple and hackneyed stories and

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fail to develop the incidental action in a new and effective way. Even the oldest of plots, providing they possess dramatic strength and sympathetic appeal, can be made entertaining by clever treatment. But if there is no novelty in the treatment, the triteness stands out unrelieved.

There is relatively less demand for melodramatic "thrillers" of this kind than there was a few years ago, and the tendency of the producers is in the direction of more human and realistic plays. But if an author has the experience and the material for a play of this type, he should make every effort to distinguish it in swift and unusual action, and in sympathetic characterization, even though the basic situations are in themselves trite.

"MADAME X."

(Goldwyn production; starring Pauline Frederick; adapted from the play of Alexandre Bisson by J. E. Marsh; directed by Frank Lloyd.)

SYNOPSIS

Jacqueline Floriot has been forbidden by her husband, public prosecutor in Paris, to re-enter their home, although their small son is dangerously ill. Because of an unfortunate meeting a year or two before between Jacqueline and a friend of her husband's, who made love to her and was overseen by Floriot, the latter, refusing to hear any explanations, but believing the worst of his wife, banished her. Having grown desperate with anxiety she comes to the house unseen by him and is admitted by a servant. But M. Floriot discovers her and refuses sternly to allow her to see Raymond, the child. He forces her from his doors forever.

Her life becomes a wretched, dishonorable experience and she sinks lower and lower into a sad condition of degradation. She is found twenty years later by Laroque, a disreputable Frenchman traveling in South America. He consents to take her back to Paris as his "life's companion." After arriving, her history becomes known to two rascally prosecutors, whose profession is demanding hush money for concealing scandals. Laroque is let in on the profits and proceeds to call upon Floriot, who has now risen to a very high position in Paris.

Jacqueline, frenzied for fear her son will learn the truth about her and have his career spoiled, threatens to shoot Laroque. He laughs at her and proceeds to go regardless, whereupon she kills him.

She is taken to prison and for months refuses to talk, calling herself "Mme. X." Unaware of the old woman's identity, Raymond has been made her attorney. The sight of her inspires him with pity. At the trial, his eloquence and sympathetic plea win for her her freedom. She learns who he is before he finishes, but still refrains from disclosing her relationship to him. But Floriot has seen her and recognizes her. He tells the truth to his son. Mother and son meet a short time before death ends her suffering.

This production affords a notable illustration of a tremendously dramatic photoplay, in which all of the action tends steadily toward one big scene,—the courtroom defense of the mother by her son. The scene is one that grips an audience because the characters are real people who "live and move and have their being." Jacqueline, a victim of her husband's unreasoning jealousy, wins the heartfelt sympathy of the spectator at first because of her innocence. A guiltless wife and mother, she is torn from her home, a helpless outcast, her ideals shattered, her life's happiness destroyed. Then, in her degradation there is a refinement, almost a nobility about her that makes her so pathetic that the spectator suffers with her vicariously. Never once is the magic current that binds her to her audience, broken. In spite of her gutter experiences she is "a lady" as even the uncouth Laroque recognizes. Finally, in her self-sacrifice for the sake of Raymond, she arises to heights supreme: our pity turns to admiration, to awe. When her latent mother love springs to life, she more than redeems herself for whatever sin may have been hers.

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The other characterizations, though of much slighter importance in the story, are equally remarkable: the uncompromising, merciless husband, who is at once a "type" and an individual; the eager-eyed young enthusiast, Raymond, who becomes, through his warm love for humanity, an exponent of justice and mercy; the vacillating Laroque, ready to sell his soul for a bribe; and the unctuous, comical rascals, whose wares are scandals, and whose profession is thereby lucrative.

The photoplay is, unnecessarily, almost devoid of light touches,—the only flashes of humor throughout being supplied by these two scandal-mongers.

Perhaps nothing could be more instructive to the prospective screen writer than a close analysis of the plot construction of "Madame X." A great many situations are used, and used effectively. The banishment of Jacqueline is based, of course, on Situation VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment") being used as a casual situation to motivate Floriot's decree. The backbone of the entire structure is that idealistic situation, XXI, ("Self Sacrifice for Kindred"), which enters the plot twice: first, as the underlying situation of Jacqueline's murder of Laroque, and again, in her persistent determination to conceal her identity, whatever the cost may be. In this second case, the situation induces steadily-increasing suspense, which is only relieved in the climax. Situation II ("Deliverance") serves as the crisis of the courtroom sequence.

The climactic situation is that much-warned-against one, XXXV ("Recovery of a Lost One"). Here it is not only permissible, but distinctly apposite. The justification for it lies in the fact that it is convincingly motivated. Jacqueline's return to Paris is only natural,—her irrepressible longing to be near her own, to catch a glimpse of the son she could not claim, is a human, understandable longing. Raymond's advance in his chosen profession is well accounted for. There is, then, a good foundation to suppose that these two should be brought into contact.

Situation XXXV is the direct result of Situation XXXIV ("Remorse"), which causes Floriot to tell Raymond the truth. XXVII ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One") is merely incidental, an inevitable accompaniment of Situation XXXV, and is immediately eclipsed by XXXVI, ("Loss of Loved Ones") which, in its application here is so full of pathos, striking the last tragic note of the story.

The logical ending is an "unhappy ending" and those responsible for the production of the picture had artistic vision and consequently realized the necessity for departing from convention. Here is an indication that the "unhappy ending" is coming into its own. It is being generally recognized that every story compels an outcome that *grows from* the story itself, and any other outcome will be artificial. The student should make the ending of his plot ring true,—"happy" or "unhappy" to the contrary notwithstanding.

"Madame X" is a forceful and noble mother-love story: an old theme, treated in a new way. Moreover, it is intrinsically dramatic. These are the two strongest contributory reasons for its success.

"THE KID"

Charles Chaplin production; starring Charles Chaplin; story and continuity by Charles Chaplin; directed by Charles Chaplin.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens seriously with the abandonment of a baby by its unfortunate mother. This phase is continued only long enough to establish deep sympathy for the child. With the entrance of Chaplin in his familiar tramp make-up, the comic note is struck with the comedian's old masterly touch and is maintained with brilliant effect, except through the slight but welcome traces of wholesome and natural pathos. The use of these serious scenes is justified by the relationship between the two leading characters,—the tramp and the child. The tramp adopts the forsaken child, and

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their attachment is a real one, which deepens steadily through the five years of care and affection the mature outcast gives to the little waif.

There are scenes where domestic economy, as practiced in the household of the baby's foster-father, is turned into a well-spring of unrestricted mirth. The humor of the entire breakfast scene, the comic cleverness with which the tramp turns his sole article of bedding into a gorgeous lounging robe, and his lesson to his young charge in the refinements of table etiquette and the proper use of the knife—these are all extra joyful incidents in a picture which is richly endowed with original and unforced drollery.

The tramp fights against heavy odds to prevent the boy from being taken to an orphan asylum—fights with a tragic intensity that shows his deep love for the little fellow.

During a dream the tramp sees the dwellers of the tough court where he lives, turn into perfect angels and sprout wings. He poises himself for flight and sails gracefully the length of the court, still clad in his famous trousers and shoes and what goes with them.

Finally, the child's mother, who has become a famous singer, locates her boy, and welcomes to her home not only him, but his beloved foster-father as well.

It is unusual to find a comedy, the action of which is founded upon heart interest. Very seldom has genuine pathos been combined with the genuine humor of the screen comedy. Yet "The Kid" goes to show that the effect of both is greatly heightened by this intermingling. In comedy, much more than in drama, characters are allowed to be merely "types" instead of individuals. But in this radical photoplay, "the tramp" and "the kid" have personalities all their own. They make an audience weep and laugh simultaneously.

The plot, then, depends not upon situation for its interest, but upon characterization. The story is a simple one,—for the most part, merely portraying the home life and the "business" life (for the boy as a window-breaker and the tramp as a glazier work splendidly together) of these two pals. The humor and the pathos spring from incidents, rather than from situations.

A comedic use is made of V ("Pursuit"), when the boy is chased by policemen, for throwing stones. VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune") enters, as a serious situation, when the attempt is made to take "the kid" to an asylum. This is effectively combined with V ("Pursuit") that is used half seriously, half humorously. XXXV ("Recovery of a Lost One"), which motivates the climax is well handled since the mother is able to trace the child because of the note she had written when she abandoned him.

Departing wholly from slapstick, and from the usual time-worn situations, which have become absolutely devoid of humor, "The Kid" is refreshing. It is novel because it is built upon a novel premise—a kind hearted tramp's adoption of a stray child. Characterization does the rest. The characters are portrayed truthfully. Consequently they are real, and appealing.

The student has in this photoplay a fine opportunity to study the subtle blending of pathos and humor; to learn how and why this plain little story of a tramp and a child leaves such a deep imprint upon the heart and mind of the spectator.

"DEADLINE AT ELEVEN."

(Vitagraph production; starring Corinne Griffith; written by Ruth Byers; continuity by Lucien Hubbard; directed by George Fawcett.)

SYNOPSIS.

Helen Stevens obtains a job as reporter on a New York morning paper. She is befriended by Jack Rawson, "star" news-gatherer, who is brilliant but dissipated. Helen exercises good influence upon him and they become engaged. One night Jack gets

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intoxicated, his mind is a blank as to what occurred, but in the morning he is accused of murder, his pocket knife being found beside the body of a dead woman. Helen tries to solve the mystery before the paper goes to press. She finds the guilty man about to sail for Porto Rico, and by a clever stratagem, brings the real facts to light and saves her lover.

In the past there have been many stories of newspaper life produced as photoplays, and "Deadline at Eleven" serves as a good example of the usual type. It contains the familiar romance between the star reporter and the heroine, the false accusation of murder against the hero, the girl's successful efforts to save him, etc. Its appeal is romantic and melodramatic, but in the actual production a good deal of suspense was developed as the result of the rather artificial mystery and the use of Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment").

In addition, Situation II, ("Deliverance"), XII, ("Obtaining"), and III, C, ("Professional Pursuit of Criminals"), are employed in the plot, which is distinguished not by its novelty, but rather by the direct and simple appeal it makes to our emotional sympathy. The acting, the direction, and the skill of the continuity are of more importance in a story of this kind than the original photoplay.

It is likely that many more stories of newspaper life will be produced in the future, for there is romance and adventure in the "game." But it is also likely that the producers will require more novel and distinctive plots in the future. Unless the student is thoroughly familiar with newspaper life and can give it a new and distinctive treatment, it would be well to select a more interesting and unusual subject.

"DESTINY."

(Produced by Universal; starring Dorothy Phillips; story by Charles Neville Buck; continuity by Elliot J. Clawson; directed by Rollin Sturgeon.)

SYNOPSIS.

This story is based upon a powerful theme which is presented as a psychological study of a man's character. A farm youth dreams of ambition. Unlike his brother, who is a weakling, he dreams of lording it in the financial world, of becoming one of its biggest figures.

The pages of the book of might-have-been are turned ten years forward; the youth is seen as a man with his dreams fulfilled. Indeed, Hamilton Burton, the boy, has become Hamilton Burton, a man of might. He becomes a Napoleon of finance, but loses his soul. He breaks up the romance of his sister with Jefferson Edwards, his bitterest rival in the business world, and brings down tragedy upon his house. His father and mother die and he meets a tragic death at the hands of the man he has ruined. The chapter of the fairy-book is turned back, however, and it is all a dream. The boy-conqueror has listened to the wise counsel of his sister, a girl of remarkable intuition. He is happy to serve mankind, not to conquer it. Ambition is a false god.

This story might be considered as an epic of Ambition (Situation XXX), but with that situation many others are combined. Situation XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), appears in the hero's interference in the love of his sister. Situation III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"), follows in his death at the hands of the man he has betrayed. In the death of his father and mother, Situation XXXVI is used. And finally, a superb use of subdivision D (3) of Situation X, ("Rescue of a Soul in Captivity to Error"), brings the story to a satisfactory conclusion.

"Destiny" is an example of the dream play, which was a very popular type of entertainment a few years ago. Because it is a rather artificial means of creating suspense, it has fallen into disuse and is under a rather strict taboo. But when a story with so thoroughly interesting a theme as this one requires the dream element to develop a dramatic plot, its use is certainly justifiable.

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Just as in a previous example, we noted that the technical elements of the story were kept in the background, so in this case it is well to observe that the financial success of the hero is of less importance and interest than the exposition of the *human* theme, the loss and rescue of a soul in error. The public is not much interested in the income or financial status of your characters; what it really wants to know is how your characters act when placed in human situations requiring strength and nobility and courage.

"HAIL THE WOMAN"

(Thomas H. Ince production; all-star cast; story and continuity by C. Gardner Sullivan; directed by John Griffith Wray.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story deals with Oliver Beresford, a grim and bigoted New England farmer, whose uncompromising creed, "Men and their sons first," disposes harshly of woman's destiny. Beresford's son, David, who is studying for the ministry, secretly marries Nan, stepdaughter of the village odd-jobs man, and their union is about to be blessed with a child. The elder Beresford learns of Nan's condition, and of his son's responsibility. True to her promise to her weak husband, who stands in fear of his father, Nan does not announce that she is David's wife. Oliver Beresford buys off the brutal odd-jobs man, and Nan is driven from home. She goes to New York, where her child is born, and where she falls into a life of shame, through want and poverty. Her husband, David, maintains a cringing silence.

Judith Beresford, beautiful daughter of the intolerant Puritan, takes Nan's part, and is likewise driven from home. She meets Nan in New York, and when Nan dies, takes care of the child. Before she dies, Nan tells Judith of her marriage to David. Time passes, and Judith decides that her brother shall clear Nan's memory and name, and recognize his child. She and the child arrive in the old New England home on the day that David is to be ordained a missionary to foreign lands. As he stands before the congregation, Judith confronts him with his child. Overcome with remorse he confesses his sin and acknowledges his child.

"Hail the Woman," another story built on the premise of the "double standard," is vitalized by its beautiful, uplifting theme: the endurance of the woman for the sake of the child. This motif is presented in three quite distinct developments: the suffering of the mother, Mrs. Beresford; the self-sacrifice of Judith in taking her little nephew and fighting his battle for him; and the desperate, heroic struggle of Nan to give her baby the necessities of life. Into the plot is woven a composite picture of various phases of mother-love.

The expression of this theme depends primarily upon characterization contrasts: the three women differ in age, in temperament, in personality: there is in Judith a splendid, stalwart strength; in Nan a wistful pathos and childish innocence; in Mrs. Beresford hopeful patience and quiet fortitude.

The predominate element of conflict in the story is the clash between the iron-bound, indomitable will of Beresford and the idealism of his daughter. This antagonism, sustained throughout the action, culminates in Judith's brave decision to make her brother atone for his sin. There are, also, subordinate currents of conflict, the nature of which is more or less incidental,—such as the conflict between Judith and David, and that between Nan and her stepfather. In fact, the very framework of the plot is conflict.

The student should carefully analyze these examples of conflict because they afford excellent illustrations of "subjective" (rather than "objective") opposition—that is, opposition which arises directly from *the characters themselves*, instead of from the intervention of external forces. Beresford is a narrow-minded, bigoted Puritan. His merciless code emanates from his personality, just as Judith's sweet womanliness and sincere regard for her fellow creatures cause her to resist her

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father. Such a struggle of personality with personality is far more significant than the struggle of a character with misfortune or "Fate." In other words, it is much more dramatic to have a character forced to action by another character, rather than by a convenient (to the author) loss of a fortune, the adventitious illness or death of relatives, or a timely shipwreck.

The story abounds in dramatic situations. Nan's fulfillment of her vow to David to keep their marriage a secret, depends upon XXI ("Self Sacrifice for Kindred"). This is used with even greater dramatic intensity, when Judith heroically shifts the burden from the frail shoulders of Nan to her own. XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior") manifests itself at several points, as upon it is founded the conflict between Beresford and Judith. This situation is used to excellent advantage in its novel application to the father-daughter relationship. Toward the end, XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") is an important factor in the love affair of Judith and Richard Stuart. The climax is based upon XXXIV ("Remorse"), and endows the big scene of the photoplay with virility and heart interest.

It must be admitted that there are certain technical flaws in the construction of this plot,—such as the coincidental meeting of Nan and Judith in the city,—a meeting which might have been logically motivated. Also, it is precarious for the novice to introduce such material as Nan's degradation, on account of censorship regulations. This was handled in the present instance so subtly that the board of censors did not object to it. But subject matter of a similar nature given a less expert treatment would very likely have been considered unavailable by the producer for this reason.

The story has real characterizations, human interest, and dramatic strength. These outstanding qualities recommend it strongly for the discriminating diagnosis of the student.

"THE DIVORCEE."

(Produced by Metro; starring Ethel Barrymore; from the play by W. Somerset Maugham; continuity by June Mathis and Katherine Kavanaugh; directed by Herbert Blache.)

SYNOPSIS.

Lady Frederick Berolles, the former Betsy O'Hara, married Lord Berolles to help her impoverished family. Lord Berolles turns out to be a brute and on one occasion publicly insults her when Sir Paradine Fuldre, Lady Frederick's one-time suitor, is seen in company with her. That same night, Lady Frederick receives word from her sister, Kitty Beresford, that she has been obliged to visit the rooms of Robert Montgomery, possessor of secrets of Kitty's indiscreet past that she does not wish to reach her husband, Horace Beresford. Lady Frederick goes to the rescue, and as luck would have it, Beresford also calls. There is a tell-tale scarf lying on a chair that he recognizes as his wife's. But Lady Frederick appears and claims it as her's. Thus does she sacrifice her own reputation for her sister's. A divorce soon follows.

A number of years later Lady Frederick is at Monte Carlo in rather reduced circumstances, but still making the best of it. The young Lord Mereston is seen much with her, and finally his mother sends for her brother, none other than Sir Paradine, to settle matters. So, to Monte Carlo comes Lady Frederick's old suitor, to learn the truth of the situation. He soon discovers that Lady Frederick does not love the young lord, and he also discovers that he himself is again in love with her. Lady Mereston insults Lady Frederick and she is about to produce letters to show what sort of a fellow her "sainted" husband was when Lord Mereston declares his high regard and admiration for his late father. Again Lady Frederick sacrifices herself and soon after disillusioned Lord Mereston by permitting him to watch her "make-up." Lord Mereston straightway realizes the difference in ages and though his infat-

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uation for Lady Frederick takes flight, his admiration for her increases. But Lady Frederick becomes his aunt, for Sir Paradene finds he can not live alone any longer.

Taken from a stage play by one of the most brilliant of modern English dramatists, this photoplay is an excellent example of dramatic technique. The rather long lapse of time does not really destroy the unity of the action, for it is the simplest and easiest way of passing over a dull period in the story. In this case the lack of a strict unity of time is the result of a worth-while elimination of non-essential details. It is well to observe also that each of the two distinct parts of the play is in itself unified.

The basic situation of the story is, of course, XXI ("Self-Sacrifice for Kindred"), which manifests itself in Betsy's marriage to Lord Berolles to save her family, in her protection of her sister (which involves Situation XXXIII), and later in her sacrifice of her own pride for the sake of the brother and the mother of the man she loves. Situation XXV, ("Adultery"), combined with Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), appears in Berolles' attitude toward his wife. There is also something of XXVII, ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One"), in this episode. Situation XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), occupies an important place in the story, first in Lady Frederick's marriage to Berolles, which keeps her from Sir Paradene and later in the climax when she reveals her age to Lord Mereston. The combination of these elements forms the backbone of a very dramatic comedy drama of the higher type. There is enough poignance and dramatic tension to awaken emotional sympathy, and yet there is an excellent vein of ironic comedy running through the story.

The idea of a woman disillusioning a young man in love with her as Lady Frederick does in this case, or of a man using similar means to save a young girl enamoured of him from folly, has been used a number of times both on the stage and in photoplays. It is a very effective form of self-sacrifice, and in new guises it may be used again with good effect. But it should spring naturally from the characters of a story, and the writer should not attempt to super-impose the dramatic trick upon unsuitable characters, or in a plot that does not require it.

Similarly, the idea of a girl marrying for money at the behest of her family is a familiar one, and its use must be very skillful to be effective. In its usual form, it fails to win the spectator's sympathy for the heroine. It is perhaps better suited to comedy drama than to more tense and emotional treatment.

"DOUBLE SPEED."

(Paramount-Artcraft Production; starring Wallace Reid; story by J. Stewart Woodhouse; continuity by Clara Kennedy; directed by Sam Wood.)

SYNOPSIS.

"Speed" Carr is making an auto trip from New York to Los Angeles, where he is to meet his millionaire uncle, John Ogden. He carries a letter of introduction from his uncle to Donald McPherson, President Continental Bank of Los Angeles. On the road he is robbed by tramps of all his possessions and arrives in Los Angeles dressed as a hobo. He is thrown out of the bank and secures a job as chauffeur to Sallie McPherson, the president's daughter. Ogden wires McPherson that he is coming. The latter, not being able to produce the expected "Speed" and fearing lest his financial plans may fail, induces the real "Speed" to impersonate himself. Ogden is pleased to note that Sallie and his nephew are in love, the father is indignant, but helpless. Finally, when Ogden tells "Speed" to sign some papers, McPherson confesses the deception and denounces "Speed" for daring to make love to his daughter. But Sallie tells him they were married that morning. "Speed" identifies himself and all ends well.

This story is a very good example of a comedy drama with a slightly melodramatic basis. It is apparent almost from a reading of the brief synopsis that the story was written as a photoplay, for the complications and situations and all of the action are admirably suited to the needs of the screen. The romantic, dashing char-

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acter, the sudden change in his fortunes, the misunderstandings with which he is met, the unusual predicament that leads to his impersonation of himself (excellent use of recoil), the swift romance, the suspensive climax, etc.—all of these qualities in the play provide pleasing and interesting screen material, with chances for picturesque production and good character contrasts. It is unusual to have so great a degree of suspense in comedy, but in this case the author has devised a plot that combines the expected with the unexpected in a very unusual way.

The story again opens with a comedic use of Situation VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty and Misfortune"), and then involves various forms of XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), and XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"). The use of recoil in the form of Situation XXXIII is especially notable, for it again gives the climax exceptional comedic power.

This story may be considered as a good example of the ever-popular type of play in which such stars as Wallace Reid, William Desmond, William Russell, Tom Moore, Owen Moore, Warren Kerrigan and many others appear. Stories of this kind are almost always salable, providing they are properly constructed and well-characterized, for it is impossible for any audience to be bored by a gay, romantic, suspensive plot that embraces the elements of this example.

"A FAVOR TO A FRIEND."

(Produced by Metro; starring Emmy Wehlen; story and continuity by Luther Reed; directed by John Ince.)

SYNOPSIS.

Briefly the story tells of an heiress' rebellion against her guardian, Mark Arnold. Unless she signs certain papers he and his cohorts are sure to face a long prison term. But she rebels and the consequence is she is locked in her room, but manages to escape. Mary has a friend, Gloria Morning, who is the star of an unsuccessful musical show. And so she plans to look her up. The press agent of the play conceives the idea of having the star come up missing so as to attract the attention of the public. He outlines his plan to Robert Garrison, who consents to steal Gloria and keep her a prisoner in his mountain cabin. But the young kidnapper mistakes Mary for the actress. When she realizes the scheme she is immensely grateful since it takes her away from her guardian. And Mary carries out the deception admirably.

Of course, everything develops romantically for her, and the guardians are given their just deserts in the end. By running away she saved her fortune and the show and found a wonderful husband.

In marked contrast with "The Divorcee," which is an ironical comedy drama of society, this story is a light and rather farcical comedy drama with a vein of melodrama underlying it. It is clever, satirical and swift enough in action to hold the interest throughout.

The inception situation is, of course, VIII, ("Revolt"), which is followed quickly by "Erroneous Judgment", (XXXIII), and then by "Abduction", in this case the abduction of a consenting woman, (X-B). The use of "Erroneous Judgment", (XXXIII), involves the rather hackneyed and somewhat "convenient" idea of mistaken identity, but in this case it is partially allowable because of the farcical nature of the plot. Also, it is not implausible that such a mistake should be made, for in a careful production such as this story received, the situation is prepared and motivated by incidents which made it appear natural.

As in most light comedy dramas the success of this photoplay depends more upon the incidental humorous treatment and the subtitles than upon the situational basis. A very light plot can be made to serve if it is developed in a sufficiently clever manner, but there is always a danger of not having enough material for five reels of film.

It is well to observe the satirical use of the Situation X, ("Abduction"), which in this case is cleverly combined with Revolt and Erroneous Judgment.

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A photoplay of this type is produced and played in the farce tempo, and it is really a more difficult form to write than straight drama, for every amusing detail of action must be visualized and created by the author.

"FIGHTING DESTINY."

(Produced by Vitagraph; starring Harry Morey; story by Stanley Shaw; directed by Paul Scardon.)

SYNOPSIS.

A young political reformer is Larry Cavendish, engaged to Caryl Rundlege, daughter of a former governor.

While attending a bachelor dinner given in his honor, the night before the wedding, Larry is handed a note by the waiter, with instructions not to open it until he reaches home.

It was from his fiancée, and she had vanished. Larry's frenzied search for Caryl is replete with thrills and leads him through many adventures in the underworld. He is refused aid by the police and all his political friends, and even his prospective father-in-law, the former governor, tries to prevail upon Larry to give up the search.

But undaunted, he continues the hunt alone, braving the dangers that spring up. He feels that there is some strong political and mysterious influence working against him.

After a fight with Levarro, a beggar padrone who furnishes blackmail information to an unscrupulous political boss, Larry sees his sweetheart shot dead by one of the stray bullets.

Heartbroken, he carries the body through the underworld until he is brought to bay in a notorious opium den. The Police Commissioner, finally aroused, selects that particular moment for a raid on the den, led by no other than Caryl herself.

The dead girl was her twin sister, and Caryl had been lured away on the eve of her wedding by a note from Levarro, which stated that she had a twin sister and that she was dying.

Her father, the former governor, had appealed to her to keep the matter of her having a twin sister in the underworld a secret to avoid disgrace for all of them.

Larry and Caryl are thus reunited and the corrupt political ring is smashed.

This story is a frank melodrama and can only be judged from that point of view. As such it is a thrilling and sensational photoplay, providing a strong and heroic role for the star and offering many excellent opportunities for thrilling action. Situations X, ("Abduction"), IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), XI, ("The Enigma"), XII, ("Obtaining"), XXVII, ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One"), and XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), all play a vital part in this photoplay. To a lesser degree both XXXV and XXXVI appear.

"Erroneous Judgment" in this case involves a rather thrilling mystery element, which is eventually solved in a hackneyed way, by the explanation that the girl Larry saw shot was the twin sister of his sweetheart. This same explanation has been used times without number in much the same way, and it usually destroys the illusion that the preceding action has created. In writing melodramas of this kind, with a definite mystery element in them, it is a good plan to have a sounder explanation clearly thought out before the mystery is "planted."

The political element in this story affords a striking underworld locale, but in general stories dealing with such superficialities as municipal politics, graft, etc., should be avoided. Except in melodrama, in which the thrills will make up for any lack of strict logic, one should strive for logical and fundamental and realistic treatment of plot material. And the editors have no real objection to plot logic in melodrama.

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"THE NOOSE"

(Famous Players-Lasky production; starring Betty Compson; story by Constance Lindsay Skinner.)

SYNOPSIS

As children, the clever jugglers, Coralyn and Genelle, have been brought up for his own purposes by a famous French harlequin who is also a thief. Coralyn excels in jugglery, but Genelle, being her superior in brains, is eventually trained to larceny. When scarcely out of her teens she creates a tremendous sensation by purloining a celebrated emerald necklace, known as "The Noose," but this, to the everlasting wrath of Harlequin, she afterwards restores to its rightful owners. Then the war breaks out and the girl welcomes it as an opportunity to begin life from a new angle. After four years of magnificent hospital service she comes to America as Joan Parker, her whole idea being to enter upon a career of clean and simple living, keeping as close as possible to the ideals engendered by the war.

In New York she runs across two friends, Hugh Duyker and Captain Jack Allenby, both of whom she has nursed in France. Both men are in love with her but although Joan is deeply attracted to Allenby, she believes that the very commonplaceness of young Duyker will safeguard her adventurous feet. About Allenby there is a far more subtle charm but there is also a suggestion of mystery, of portent, that holds the girl aloof. Some years before his meeting with Joan, Allenby's brother in England had had an affair with Coralyn, Joan's sister. Allenby, in extricating the youngster from what promised to be a serious entanglement, scorched his own reputation and eventually changed his original name of Parker to that which he now carries. It is what she has heard of Parker that has influenced Joan to use that name for her own disguise. To her, Parker is a hero, but she believes him dead. Of his metamorphosis into Allenby she knows nothing, nor of his brother's infatuation for her sister. Allenby is startled by Joan's resemblance to Coralyn and gradually becomes convinced of their relationship. He is also convinced that if young Duyker learns of her identity, he will decide that he does not care to marry her. Allenby, Joan, and Duyker meet at a fete given by Duyker's sister-in-law ostensibly in the interest of French war sufferers, but in reality to show off her magnificent new emerald, a pendant, indeed, from the famous necklace of "The Noose." Duyker plans to make the fete an occasion for a proposal to Joan and Allenby has asked her frankly not to marry the boy.

Other guests at the fete are detectives, a French count, and Molly, the sister of Gertrude Duyker. Molly is in love with Hugh and insanely jealous of his devotion to Joan. Therefore when the French count claims to have seen Joan before and is trying to remember where he has seen her, Molly begs him to discover who she is, hoping that it will prove to be Joan's undoing. At last the count hits upon the baffling identity; the young lady is.....and he confides his suspicions to the amazed but delighted Molly. Later, when Gertrude misses her costly gem, Molly commands the count to divulge the secret of Joan's identity and the girl is at once accused of the theft.

A dramatic scene follows during which Allenby comes audaciously to Joan's rescue and advises that she be searched. The search discloses nothing save the fact that the missing gem is not upon Joan's person and she and Allenby leave the room together. He takes her to a quiet spot in the gardens and tells her how he has come into possession of the facts concerning her history, of his own connection with her sister, of his love for her (Joan), and finally suggests that they take the emerald, which is at this moment in his sash where Joan herself has hidden it, and upon the money secured from its sale, base the beginnings of a new life for both of them.

While they are still talking they are confronted by the infuriated count who is none other than Harlequin, and Joan is accused to her face of having the jewel.

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When she denies all knowledge of it, the old man rushes toward her with a dagger, but before the blade can reach her heart, one of the detectives fires and kills the count instantly. When it is seen that he is dead, Allenby quietly slips the stolen emerald into one of the old man's sleeves, after which he leads the half-fainting Joan into the house. When all the details of the affair come to light, it is discovered that Allenby is working in connection with the detectives and has had full information concerning the plan of Harlequin and the history of the jewel for some time. His suggestion to Joan that they keep the emerald themselves and try to sell it has been merely a test of her own honesty.

The story comes to a dramatic close with Allenby announcing Joan's marriage to himself, to take place the following day, and with Gertrude Duyker insisting that the ceremony shall be celebrated at her house. It is hardly necessary to add that Molly is as happy as young Duyker is crestfallen and gloomy, and that Joan rejoices in knowing that her dream of right-living has at last a chance of becoming fulfilled.

There is good character study in this appealing little story, built upon the struggle of a girl who has been brought up to journey the broad and easy path, to accustom herself to the narrow, hard way. Joan is a living and lovable person: her evolution from Harlequin's underling into a woman whose soul has been purified by four years of self-sacrifice in war service, is striking. The characterization contrasts merit close attention throughout. Steady, reserved Allenby, who, too, has passed through sorrow,—throws into relief the boyish instability and impetuosity of young Duyker, just as Molly is the direct antithesis of Joan. The greedy old man, Harlequin, is drawn with telling strokes.

The fresh characterization and the vigor of the theme redeem the story from mediocrity, where it would very probably be classed did it depend upon situation alone for its interest. The action, for the most part, is conventional. The entire motivation involving the theft of the necklace and the clearing of Joan's name is an old treatment of time-worn material. Also, many of the plot steps are based upon coincidence. Situation XI ("The Enigma") has considerable importance in this story. VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune") is used in the beginning; and XXXII ("Mistaken Jealousy") and XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment") are introduced in connection with Molly's effort to obtain Hugh's love for herself, despite the boy's infatuation for Joan.

The personalities of these various characters are so clear cut and interesting, that the story appeals to the spectator primarily on this account. The action moves swiftly from one complication to the next, until a logical climax is arrived at,—a climax that an audience welcomes because it insures the happiness of Joan.

The need for satisfying characterization such as that exemplified in this story, cannot be stressed too emphatically or too often. The more human the people in the photoplay, the more human the photoplay. A character with the beauty, the idealism of Joan is bound to win the hearts of an audience.

"FOOTLIGHTS AND SHADOWS."

(Selznick Production; starring Olive Thomas; story by Bradley King; continuity by R. Cecil Smith; directed by John W. Noble.)

SYNOPSIS.

Gloria Dawn is the latest Broadway favorite, a bright, scintillating star of "The Midnight Revue," and "as straight as a string." Peter Shaw, a wealthy man-about-town, proposes marriage. Dazzled by the prospects of wealth and luxury, she accepts, though she does not love him.

The same night a strange man enters her apartment with his own key. She discovers he is irrational and is horrified when he falls unconscious. He passes through

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a long period of delirium, remaining in Gloria's apartment by order of the doctor. During his convalescence he makes love to her. She feels herself strangely attracted to him.

Later she learns he is Jerry O'Farrell, millionaire sportsman, who contracted fever while tiger hunting in Africa. With a happy heart she goes to inform him of his identity. But during an unguarded moment he had slipped away.

Arriving home she finds Shaw, who has learned of the man who stayed there for two weeks. Shaw no longer wants her for his wife, and makes an insulting proposal. O'Farrell enters and a fierce struggle ensues. Shaw, severely thrashed, beats an inglorious retreat, and O'Farrell gently takes Gloria in his arms.

This story gives an excellent example of a dramatic beginning of a photoplay. In the introductory scenes we see Gloria about to marry a man she does not love; we know she is unhappy and we hope that something will occur that will prevent the marriage. As she is lying restlessly in bed a strange man enters her apartment, with his own key! Gloria does not know him, the audience does not know him, and suspense is maintained almost throughout the play by this clever note of mystery, which in the end is resolved by a very logical explanation. The man had lived in that apartment a year before and in his fever he simply returned to it.

The rest of the story follows a more conventional plot pattern, but it would be difficult to find a better example of a gripping, suspenseful, romantic beginning than in "Footlights and Shadows." The situations that occur are VII, II, and XXXIII.

It would have been possible to have developed a much stronger and more sustained plot on the basis of this beginning, but since the play was adapted from a short story originally written for magazine publication it did not possess sufficient dramatic strength for a five-reel photoplay. In a short story one good situation is sufficient for the entire plot, but as we have seen a five-reel photoplay requires at least three of considerable dramatic strength.

This story illustrates in a very excellent way the use of a slight element of mystery. The mystery is by no means the most important element in the plot and its solution is perfectly natural. It does not become implausible, but it supplies an additional element of suspense that could not be achieved from a single conflict between the two men for the love of the girl. A slight mystery element of this kind is often very effective, especially if it is used as the inception of the play.

"THE FORGED BRIDE."

(Universal production; starring Mary MacLaren; story by J. G. Hawks; continuity by Hal Hoadley; directed by Douglas Gerrard.)

SYNOPSIS.

Forger Bill Reynolds collects money on a bad check and goes home to his daughter, Peggy, with the intention of turning over a new leaf and keeping straight. But from the window he sees a squad of detectives approaching, realizes that the game is up, induces Peggy to leave the house, is arrested and taken to jail. He is later sentenced by Judge Farrell to the penitentiary. The prison where he is confined is close to a beach resort where Peggy works. She becomes a favorite with the college boys, one of whom, Dick Van Courtland, marries her. Dick's guardian is Judge Farrell, his mother a wealthy society matron. Farrell is recognized by the girl, but the judge keeps her secret. Clara Ramirez, jealous, tries to undermine Peggy's standing. Peggy writes to Bill that the Judge thinks she resembles his own daughter, who was kidnapped when a baby. Old Bill forges a letter which makes it appear that Peggy is really the Judge's daughter, and the Judge, though fully aware of the trick Bill has played, accepts Peggy as his daughter and Dick's wife.

This story is a very good example of a familiar plot treated in a new way. Up to the last reel the story follows a timeworn pattern and one is led to expect the con-

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ventional ending, in which the Judge recognizes Peggy as his long-lost daughter and so establishes her social position. In the hands of a less adroit craftsman than Mr. Hawks this play would have been an ordinary and hackneyed melodrama, but in the climax there is a new and dramatic treatment of the old material. It is well to observe that the novelty of the plot, the new twist given the situations, is the result of careful characterization rather than of any mechanical device. Given the characters of Bill, Peggy and the Judge, developed as distinctive individuals, some degree of novelty must enter into the play. Bill's forgery to establish his daughter, the Judge's acceptance of Peggy even though he knows of the trick—these two distinctive plot elements are purely the result of characterization. All three of these characters are sympathetic, even the old criminal, for as far as we learn from the story he commits crime only in order to help his daughter. Many beginning writers would have introduced Bill as a hardened criminal and would then have endeavored to develop sympathy for him. In that case, however, his character would detract from the central drama with which we are properly concerned. The story is a very good example of starting the drama at the right point. It is not necessary for the audience to know any more about Bill than the story discloses; his past life is irrelevant.

Also, the action of the play starts on a plane of dramatic interest. Bill is shown trying to escape from the police. This is an exciting use of Situation V ("Pursuit"), in which our sympathy is with the one pursued, both because of his love for his daughter and because of the natural instinct to take sides with the one who suffers.

In addition, Situations VII, XXXV, XXXVI, XXVIII and XXXIII enter into the play, providing sufficient dramatic strength for five interesting reels of action.

This story may be studied by the beginner as a good example of familiar melodramatic material made interesting and novel by human characterization and clever technical treatment.

"WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS"

(Paramount production; starring Lois Wilson; story by James M. Barrie; directed by William De Mille.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story of this delightful Barrie play is about Maggie Wylie, a quaint Scotch girl who believes herself without charm, but in reality is most charming, and possesses an unusual quantity of intelligence. Her father and brothers, who idolize her, arrange to provide an education for the ambitious young politician, John Shand, in return for which they demand that he marry Maggie. He is too conceited to realize that he is winning success only because of the clever touches his wife injects into his speeches when she types them. Upon discovering that he has become involved in a foolish intrigue with a designing woman, Maggie declares she will give him his freedom, and sends him away to a house party with his "affinity" where the two, thrown constantly together, soon weary of each other. On the eve of Shand's biggest speech, Maggie skilfully prevents him from making a fatal political blunder. He is brought finally to the realization that he has not won success solely by himself. Maggie's sense of humor redeems him.

It is exceedingly difficult to screen such a subtle play and to retain so well its intangible elements, as William De Mille succeeded in doing in this production. The story, founded upon the eternal conflict between man and woman, is replete with humorous detail and clever incident. The character contrasts are excellent. Maggie, with her wistfulness and her "good common sense" immediately wins the hearty allegiance of the audience, and they follow intently the battle of her wit, and her quaint, unerring sense of humor, with John's self-importance and painful dignity. Sybil, "the woman in the case," is delineated as a shallow, brainless, pretty woman who thinks to inspire a man by gazing at him soulfully, whereas Maggie rests all her power of holding the elusive male upon darning his socks and typing his manuscripts efficiently. In her quietly persistent way Maggie masters one situation after another

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until she succeeds at last in routing completely the "self-made man" theory, and in transforming her husband into a human being. The drollery and the solemnity of the canny old Scotch father and the rollicking brothers add many telling touches to the action. The vein of light satire in the plot serves to bring out the theme. But it is the characterization which, though depending to a considerable extent upon clever subtitling, compels the interest of the spectator more than anything else in the picture.

The technique involves Situation XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior") XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love"), XXX ("Ambition"), and XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment").

This photoplay is significant to the student for a good many reasons. First, it exemplifies masterly characterization. It gives an old theme: the relationship of man and woman in the scheme of things,—a modern application and a humorous treatment. It is noteworthy, too, in that it presents the "triangle" situation in a new light. The wife, upon being deposed from the throne of her husband's affections, is not antagonistic and vengeful, according to conventional methods of plotting, but rather, very congenial in her desire to make these two "soul mates" happy, and very practical in carrying forward her project to accomplish this end. What Barrie did for the story, Mr. De Mille did for the production, so that the picture stands out as a distinctive example of what the cinematic art can accomplish.

"THE GAY LORD QUEX."

(Goldwyn production; story by Arthur Wing Pinero; directed by Harry Beaumont; starring Tom Moore.)

SYNOPSIS.

Lord Quex is a typical product of the idle rich, and a notorious philanderer. His distress is acute when he falls in love with a charming girl, Muriel Eden, but finds that his prominent past is a bar to a happy wedding. However, upon promising to reform, the girl consents to wed him. Muriel has a friend in Sophie Fullgarney and Sophie disapproves of the gay Lord Quex. She attempts to prove that Quex is unworthy of Muriel by informing her of a compromising situation in which she finds Quex with the sentimental Duchess of Strood. But Sophie's own reputation is compromised by a clever trick on the part of the nobleman and she is only saved in the eyes of her sweetheart by Quex. Muriel now is suspicious of Quex and thinks seriously of wedding another, but Sophie comes to the rescue and all ends happily for Quex.

This comedy drama of the romantic kind is a very good example of the social comedy of manners, and the characterization of the gay young lord who has flirted so much and so often that his reputation is ruined, is a thing of delight. The plot really springs from the characterization, for when the gay Lord Quex comes in contact with the girl he learns to love one knows that the other women of his innocent but flirtatious past will provide a strong and amusing element of conflict. Quex is the sort of a man who tells every pretty woman he meets that she has wonderful eyes, and so charmingly that they all fall in love with him. In this case the friend of the heroine considers him too wicked to marry the girl of his choice and tries to report a compromising predicament of the lord's. By a clever trick he places her in the very same predicament. This is a very fine example of the use of comedic recoil, and it shows how skillfully the situation of "Erroneous Judgment" (XXXIII) can be used as a basis of comedy and comedy drama. That situation, combined with a slighter element of "Mistaken Jealousy" (XXXII), forms the basis of the plot.

The story is also noteworthy for another comedic device, which is very effective in portraying character. The hero repeatedly says, to various women, "Did anyone ever tell you that you have wonderful eyes?" and each time this key-line is repeated it wins a hearty response from the audience. The use of the key-line in this way is very effective, in both comedy and drama, but care must be exercised not to use it too often. In a melodrama recently read the heroine was abducted by a brute who later was regenerated through her love. When he found her on the trail he said, "What I find on the trail I take!" Later the girl saved his life in a snowstorm on the same

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trail and as she held him in her arms she said, in an entirely different tone, "What I find on the trail I take!" The correct use of such spoken titles binds all of the action together in an inseparable unit and leads to a single dramatic impression. In the melodrama just mentioned the title was first used in the greatest crisis of the action, and the second time it brought the play to a happy ending.

"The Gay Lord Quex" also indicates a dramatic advantage some stage plays possess. This photoplay was adapted from one of the best of Pinero's stage successes, and Pinero is a very skillful dramatist. The climax of the story, especially, occurs in a very restricted area, having been confined in the stage play to one set. The result is a greater unity and forcefulness than would otherwise have been achieved. The photoplaywright will do well to study the work of Pinero and other dramatists for the stage—most of which can be found in the libraries—in order to master this principle of a close-knit and tense climax, restrained to a minimum of space.

"THE GIRL ALASKA."

(Produced by World; starring Lottie Kruse; author and direction not credited.)

SYNOPSIS.

This is a story of Alaska—a story of the trackless wastes of the North and the survival of the fittest. The merciless reaches of snow hold nature in a tight grip when the girl sets foot in Skagway, the gateway of Alaska. She has been an orphan since her father went North in search of gold. Reading in the newspapers about the opportunities offered to ambitious young men in Alaska, she determines to disguise herself as a boy and follow his adventurous path. And discovered as a stowaway on the north-bound ship she gives her name as Alaska and is obliged to scrub decks. When she suffers several indignities a fellow passenger, a youth about her own age, comes to her rescue, and instantly wins her friendship.

They decide to go as pals and he pays her voyage. So Skagway is reached. A "sourdough" offers to guide them to a rich gold country out of gratitude for grubstaking him, but after a tedious journey the pals manage to reach the cabin of an old gold seeker, who offers them hospitality. Pay dirt is struck but the old man succumbs to illness, though not before the girl learns that he is her own father.

Then one day the young man decides to return East and bring back a bride. He meets with an accident and is rescued by his pal who nurses him back to health. And eventually he discovers that she is a girl and the best little pal in the world and so they marry.

This photoplay is of especial interest to the photoplaywright because it involves one of the most timeworn of dramatic tricks—the heroine disguised as a boy, and the hero's failure to learn her sex until the very end of the story. The same use of disguise has been employed a great many times in the photoplay, but it is never wholly plausible or realistic. In comedies of the slapstick variety the disguise of men as girls, or the reverse, is frequently used, but even in that form the trick is rather ineffective and artificial. There is a romantic interest in such an element, but unless a story receives a very skillful direction and casting it will fail to convince a sophisticated audience.

Situation XXX ("Ambition"), first appears in the girl's desire to follow the lure of gold, and it is quickly followed by Situation IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), which is used with decided effectiveness. Situation XXXV ("Recovery of a Lost One") and Situation XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love"), both appear in minor episodes.

Although it would seem that the story in this case is a minor factor, it is only fair to state that this photoplay has the distinction of being the first to be produced in Alaska, with the wealth of scenery that Alaska provides. It is therefore a very commendable experiment, and the relative simplicity of the plot does not lessen its value.

For the photoplaywright, however, it is a good example of at least one dramatic trick that should be avoided or dealt with in a very careful and convincing manner.

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"THE GIRL IN NUMBER 29."

(Universal Production; all-star cast with Frank Mayo; story by Elizabeth Jordan; continuity by Philip J. Hurn; directed by Jack Ford.)

SYNOPSIS.

Laurie Devon writes a successful play and then cannot be induced to work any more. His friends deplore the rut into which he has fallen. One day Laurie, looking from his bedroom window, sees a beautiful girl in the apartment across the way holding a revolver to her head. He rushes to her apartment and, breaking in, prevents her from taking her life. He begs that he might become her protector when he sees that she is in constant fear of some horrible influence. Laurie discovers that a man named Shaw is bothering the girl whom he knows as Miss Mayo. He follows Shaw to an out-of-the-way place and is dumped into a cellar, but escapes. Later he learns that Miss Mayo has been abducted. He follows her to a country house and after battling with a gang of thugs rescues her. But in leaving he is led to believe that he has killed Shaw. Back home he confesses to his sister and friends that he is a murderer and learns that the whole affair was a frame-up to provide him with the excitement which would stimulate him to work. Miss Mayo is an actress who agrees to take the leading role in his forthcoming play. She also agrees to become his wife.

This story is a mystery story of the artificial and mechanical type, solved in the end by a device almost as trite and unreasonable as the "dream ending." To learn that all of the action we have been watching is framed up for the sake of arousing the hero to further efforts as a dramatist is just as implausible as to learn that it is all a dream. In fiction, the skillful author could maintain suspense and carry the reader's breathless interest from one chapter to the next. But on the screen, which more than any other dramatic medium requires stories that produce the illusion of reality, the implausible basis and the trick ending are technical devices that the true dramatic craftsman scorns to use. It is a simple thing to write a mystery story of this kind, but a very difficult one to bring it to a logical and realistic conclusion. Few such plays are successful for this reason.

The plot involves Situation II, ("Deliverance"), X, ("Abduction"), III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"), and XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"). The only novelty in the plot is the sudden surprise in the end of the story, but it is so palpably an artificial trick that it loses most of its dramatic value.

The great difficulty involved in writing a really plausible mystery story makes it unwise for the beginner to attempt this form. The plot material should be thoroughly tested and analyzed, and if it is found to be better suited to the short story it should be developed in that way. It is always wise, however, to select more novel basic situations than the author of this novel employed, even in writing a mystery story. The very triteness of the artificial plot adds to the implausibility of the ending.

It should be observed, however, that there is a very interesting and romantic inception in this play. The hero's sight of the girl about to shoot herself, his rescue of her, and his protection constitute an excellent beginning for a romantic, adventurous story, but the charm of this part has been lost by the effort to maintain the mystery throughout five reels.

"THE GRAY HORIZON."

(Produced by Robertson-Cole; starring Sessue Hayakawa; story and continuity by Clifford Howard; directed by William Worthington.)

SYNOPSIS.

This presents an absorbing story of a Japanese artist whose sense of honor comes above everything else. He receives a visit from his sister, who informs him that she is in search of her American husband who has so cruelly deserted her. This man lives in the immediate neighborhood and is happily married to a woman of his own race. Fate lures him to the cabin of the Japanese, where opportunity is presented to

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him to make amends. In a struggle he accidentally kills the woman and escapes. But the infuriated Oriental pursues him and finishes his earthly career.

Then into his life comes the widow of the scoundrel. She is ignorant of her husband's death and the Japanese has no knowledge of her relationship. The shadows which have crept out of his life return to torment him, for when she employs him to paint a portrait of her husband the awful truth dawns on him. He goes through with his hated task out of love and respect for the beautiful white woman. But when the canvas is finished the likeness arouses his anger to the highest pitch, and with one stroke he slashes the painting. How the shadow mounts in his life, how he confesses to the crime but spares the widow the evidence which would free him because she had thought her husband noble, marks a climax which is intensity itself.

This very thrilling and dramatic story is based upon the use and repetition of three basic situations; III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"); XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), and XXI, ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred and for a Loved One"). The basic idea of a man avenging the wrong done his sister by a man of another race is, of course, not new, but the novelty and the dramatic intensity of the story comes from the love that develops between the Japanese and the white woman, which involves something of Situation XXIX, ("An Enemy Loved").

This story may be considered as a good example of the use of the theme of vengeance, which in this case is wisely tempered with self-sacrifice and nobility. It supplies a very powerful role for the star in question, whose personality and race are well suited to portrayals of avenging heroes.

This story was obviously written for a certain "star." This is in general an unwise practice. But if the photoplaywright feels sure that he has a story specifically suited to the personality of a certain star, it should be given its chance to achieve production.

"THE GREAT AIR ROBBERY."

(Universal production; story by Jacques Jaccard and George Hively; directed by Jacques Jaccard; starring Lieut. O. L. Locklear.)

SYNOPSIS.

Wallie Mason, aviator, and Larry Cassidy, air pilot, in U. S. Mail Service, go on furlough. A gang of aerial bandits are operating as the "Death Squadron," led by Chester Van Arland. The latter plans to seize a shipment of gold going by midnight plane to the Washington Mint. Van Arland obtains possession by crooked means of a *croix de guerre*, won by Wallie in France and given by him to Beryl Caruthers. Van Arland mails this cross to himself at a New York address and tells the jealous Wallie he can get it back by betraying the route of the plane on which it is shipped, which also carries the gold. Wallie consents, recovers the cross and the gold is stolen. There follows a series of wild aerial adventures in which Larry and Wallie take part. The bandits are captured. Wallie is killed and Larry wins Beryl.

This story is worthy of note because it is the first of the aerial thrillers and has proved very successful on account of its unique place among photoplays. The story in itself is very simple, and of the serial type, depending basically upon the convenient melodramatic situations of "Pursuit," (V), and "Daring Enterprise," (IX). The actual production was distinguished by many unusual aerial thrills and the story is of secondary importance.

Many beginning writers, especially those with a love of adventure and romance, make use of similar thrilling stunts in their stories to produce dramatic effect. But in a story such stunts can only be described in a narrative manner; they depend not upon the skill of the dramatist but upon the agility of the actors. Therefore there is little dramatic value in them so far as the author's work is concerned, and producers are not likely to be impressed with them in stories unless they occur as the very natural and logical result of genuine dramatic conflicts. It is far better, generally speaking, for the writer to deal with the fundamental human emotional conflicts than with mechanical thrills of this kind.

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"FOREVER"

(George Fitzmaurice production; starring Elsie Ferguson and Wallace Reid; adapted from Du Maurier's novel, "Peter Ibbetson," by Ouida Bergere; directed by George Fitzmaurice.)

SYNOPSIS.

Du Maurier's well-known story begins with the idyllic family life in an old French garden of the Pasquiers, and their neighbors, the Seraskiers. The children of the two families, Gogo and Mimsey, are loving comrades, sharing together the beauty and the peace that surround them. Young Pasquier is an inventor, poor, but happy in the wonderful love of his beautiful wife, and of their little son, Gogo. The two children learn from a friend what they call "dreaming true,"—falling asleep with their hands behind their heads and their feet crossed, that they may be happy in their dreams.

While he is completing the experiment which is to make him famous, Pasquier is killed. Madame Pasquier is unable to survive his death. In spite of his childish protestations, Gogo is obliged to bid a tearful farewell to Mimsey and the kind Monsieur and Madame Seraskier, for his uncle, Roger Ibbetson, insists upon taking him to England for his upbringing. At the castle of the dissipated old fellow, Peter Ibbetson (as he is now called) is thoroughly unhappy. He grows into a moody, sorrowful young man. Because he will not indulge in the Roman orgies that continually take place at the castle, his uncle insults him and casts him off.

He finds employment as an architect's clerk, but his longing for the happiness of his childhood days draws him back to Paris, to the old garden, now fallen into solitude and decay. As he is musing there over the past, a beautiful woman comes from the adjoining garden. When she tells him that her joyous childhood was spent in this place, he knows she is Mimsey. For years, she and her parents had tried to find him, never succeeding. Their loving reunion is marred by the fact that Mimsey is married. At the urgent request of her father, who did not want to die leaving her alone in the world, she had wedded a young Englishman, who later became Duke of Towers. His sudden access to the nobility had resulted in dissipation, so that he had become a drunkard. Mimsey tells Peter that they must meet only in their dreams.

One evening at the theatre Peter encounters his uncle. Jealous because the attractive Spanish dancer prefers the younger man to himself, old Ibbetson offers his nephew a gross insult, declaring that they are father and son, that Peter's mother only married Pasquier to have a name for her unborn child. Peter, insane with anger, threatens to kill the slanderer, if he does not take back his lie. Slyly picking up a dagger, Ibbetson is about to murder Peter, but Peter is too quick for him, and, striking him with a small stick he carries, causes his death.

Peter is sentenced to be hanged, but Mimsey, the Duchess of Towers, uses her influence and finally persuades the authorities to commute the judgment to life imprisonment. For years the lovers "dream true," and during the hours of sleep, live in a wonderful dreamland of their own. After her divorce, Mimsey finds comfort in her waking hours among the children of an orphan's home. But at night she and Peter meet in their dreams.

While they are always young in their dreamland, in reality they reach old age. One Christmas a fire breaks out in the orphan's home, and Mimsey heroically saves all of the children, but is too exhausted to save herself. Peter, who is "dreaming true," looks for her in vain. Terrified, he awakes and tries frantically to break through the prison bars. The effort costs him his life. The two souls, passing together into "death," find in it the beautiful fulfillment of their dreams.

Another "Period Play," "Forever" is a beautiful development of the idealistic theme, the immortality of love. The atmosphere, the setting of the quaint Parisian garden, the gentle manners and customs of a courteous century, the subtle charm of

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the pictorial costumes, all combine to throw a glamour of romance over the action. The dreamlike quality is well sustained, so that, as the story unfolds, reality melts into unreality, and vice versa.

From the viewpoint of technique, the plot violates two important laws of construction: it does not observe the unity of time, and it depends largely upon the "dream" element, which is usually considered to be prohibited. The dramatic strength of the story is so powerful, however, that these disadvantages are obviated.

Upon the novel treatment of the "dream" *motif* rests the entire framework of the story. The "dream" is not used as an obvious, convenient outcome that saves the writer the trouble of working out his climax more logically and convincingly. The "dream" action is an integral part of the action as a whole, in this plot, and is, moreover, indispensable, for the story could not be told without it.

The strongest situation, which is a direct outgrowth of situation XIII ("Enmity of Kinsmen"), is IV ("Vengeance Taken for Kindred Upon Kindred"). This endows the plot with the dramatic virility it possesses. The action rises steadily to the scene in which Peter kills his uncle. A splendid use is made of II ("Deliverance"), when Mimsey succeeds in having the sentence commuted, after the suspense has almost reached the breaking point. VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune") plays a part throughout, as well as XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior"), which is the basis for the antagonism of Peter and Roger Ibbetson. XXXV ("Recovery of a Lost One"), is very well manipulated. It is natural that both Peter and Mimsey should have returned to the happy world of their childhood to dream, when the hard realities of life became too harrowing. It is coincidental, of course, that they should happen to go there at the same time, but this, it will be seen, is a necessary coincidence. XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") becomes a potential situation when Peter is imprisoned, but it never develops because the lovers are able to meet each other in their dreams.

In spite of the tragic death of Mimsey, and Peter's long years of suffering in the miserable, uncouth jail, in spite of the many strands of sorrow and distress that are woven through the fabric of the story, there is such idealism, such beauty throughout, that the story is one which will linger in the minds of an audience as a gracious memory long after they have seen the picture. This is because it gives spiritual, uplifting impetus. The screen should have more material of such fine quality. It is for the writer who can see the color and feel the joy in life, to respond to such a need.

"THE GROUCH."

(Produced by World; starring Montague Love; story by Forrest Halsey; continuity by Clara Beranger; directed by Oscar Apfel.)

SYNOPSIS.

Donald Graham is an ex-convict and is shunned by all men. After being discharged from a surveyor's troupe busy lining out an almost impenetrable southern swamp, he takes a position as caretaker of a house near by. To this place comes one Fleurette, a member of the band of Okfees, pirates' descendants who still steal, ravage and plunder. Fleurette has flown her wedding feast because the man she was to marry proved himself a coward when struck down by the chief. Graham, bitter toward all women because of his wife's faithlessness, greets Fleurette coldly. He insists that she dress as a boy and take the name of Bill. One night the Okfees attempt to take Fleurette away and Graham fights for her. Afterwards the two strike out along the road together.

In one town Graham learns that he has inherited a fortune. By this time he has grown to really love Fleurette, and with her as his wife he returns to the city. There he plans a revenge. Corinne, once his wife, has married again. Through the market Graham attacks this man, Branch, and succeeds in accomplishing his ruin. Then Corinne, fickle and selfish as of yore, again offers herself to Graham. He pre-

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tends to accept her proposal and meets her at a roadhouse. Here, however, he tells her that it is all his revenge. He is about to strangle Corrine when, in desperation, she tells him that he will find Fleurette with her husband.

This is true, Fleurette has gone to Branch in order to give Graham grounds for divorce. But, wild and impassioned, she had, at the last moment, set fire to the house, intending to die and take Branch with her. Graham arrives just in time to save her. Branch, too, is saved, and his greatest punishment is to remain alive with the mercenary Corinne.

The motivating situation of this story is the IIIrd, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"), while with it are combined XXXII, ("Mistaken Jealousy"); VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), and to a degree VI, ("Disaster").

The discovery on the part of Graham that he has fallen heir to a fortune is a rather accidental happening, and it has all the appearance of artificiality. And the sudden desire to exact vengeance for a wrong of some time past does not quite ring true. In fact, the entire latter half of the story might have been developed along much stronger and more dramatic lines. The story is of especial interest to the photoplaywright because it deals with the stock exchange. A great many photoplays have similarly dealt with this material, and it is one that many writers incorporate into their stories. But it is subject to a fundamental objection. It does not make a poignant emotional appeal to the average spectator, and it deals with a locale that lacks picturesque and dramatic interest.

If, in this case, the author had developed a strong story upon the premise suggested by the opening episodes, he would probably have achieved much finer results. For the opening episodes are colorful, romantic, unusual and of genuine dramatic value.

In this story, too, we meet the woman of the "vampire" type in the person of Corinne. Doubtless there are such women in real life, but when they are portrayed in colors too black simply for dramatic effect they are unreal and unappealing. They are merely typical, and they seldom possess the individuality of lifelike characters. The villain, male or female, is naturally the most difficult character to portray, and while it is necessary to have a sharp dramatic contrast between your characters it is not necessary to make one of them thoroughly and unbelievably wicked. Characters should be lifelike rather than anything else, first of all, and then they should really fit into a story.

From this story, then, the author may learn to avoid such artificial and superficial locales as the stock market and such typical and unreal characters as Corinne.

"HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED."

(Produced by Paramount; Thomas H. Ince supervision; starring Enid Bennett; story by Lois and Arthur Zellner; continuity by C. Gardner Sullivan; directed by Fred Niblo.)

SYNOPSIS.

Stanley and Jim Montjoy leave for South America to develop mining property there and Stanley, before going, takes fond leave of his sweetheart, Millicent Lee. In South America all does not go well with the two brothers' financial project until a wily old Spaniard makes them a large offer for the mine. They are about to accept when Diana Ramon, the Spaniard's niece, warns them not to. Further research in the mine discloses a rich vein of ore which they have previously overlooked. They are overjoyed and Jim is particularly grateful to Diana.

Stanley leaves at once for the states and immediately marries Millicent. On their wedding day Bob Davies, an old friend, presents them with a book entitled, "How to be Happy, Though Married," a volume filled with cynical advice for young couples. Millicent finds certain passages underscored and believes that her husband is the guilty party. She begins to follow out the advice literally and gets in trouble.

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The trouble is in no wise lessened when she discovers a picture of Diana in Stanley's trunk. The book hints at a dark and mysterious past. Millicent isn't comfortable.

Stanley hears from Jim and Diana, to the effect that they have been married and to meet them at the station as they are returning. In the crowd Jim is separated from his brother and wife. Stanley takes Diana home, leaves her and goes out in search of Jim. Naturally, when Millicent arrives home she recognizes the Spanish beauty. Diana can not speak English, and there is the very devil to pay until finally the brothers arrive home and straighten matters out for the happiness of all concerned.

This story is an excellent example of a simple but delightfully effective comedy drama. It is based primarily upon Situation IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), Situation XXIX, ("An Enemy Loved"), and upon many variations of XXXII, ("Mistaken Jealousy"). The unity of the dramatic action is not materially affected by the fact that the characters go to South America, for very effective dramatic action takes place there and is continued logically upon the return of Jim and Diana to the United States. There is no disconcerting break in the unity of action, and Diana must be a foreigner in order to prepare the way for the subsequent climax.

As in most comedies and comedy drama, the plot depends upon mistaken jealousy used in a light and comedic manner. It is worth while to observe that this same plot idea might have been developed in a one or two-reel comedy, though with much less effectual characterization and comedic results. The use of the book and the young wife's supposition that her husband has had a multi-colored past is novel and amusing, and yet it is a sound enough theme to carry conviction with the comedy.

The story may be considered as a splendid example of comedy drama, and the photoplaywright should endeavor to make his own work as good as this example. It should be remembered, however, that the synopsis given above is a mere outline of the plot and that there were many clever and subtle details of humor in the story itself that are not even suggested by so brief a synopsis. In comedy and comedy drama, however slight the fundamental plot may be, the action should be worked out in complete detail, with a strong vein of comedy running throughout the story.

"THE HAWK'S TRAIL."

(Synopsis and review of first four episodes of the serial produced by Burston; story by Nan Blair; directed by W. S. Van Dyke.)

SYNOPSIS—EPISODES 1-4.

Stanton Steele is a noted criminologist whose hobby is tracking down crooks. "Iron" Dugan, in order to obtain the fortunes belonging to Jean and Claire Drake, is posing as their uncle. He has abducted Jean and hidden her in an old house, but because his son Bob, who knows nothing of his father's evil schemes, is in love with Claire he gives her a comfortable home. Finally realizing that Claire is a menace to his schemes, Dugan attempts to do away with her and sends her to visit a Swami in whose house numerous men are waiting to abduct the girl. Steele, who has been hired by Claire, to unravel a mysterious burglary, learns of the plot and hastening to the Swami's home, impersonates him and routs Dugan's hired crooks. Dugan next decoys Claire to a Chinese criminal's gambling house and orders her to be killed. Again, by impersonating a Chinese merchant, Steele is able to rescue Claire who is totally unaware that her uncle is treacherous. Jean sends a message to Claire for help and Dugan, intercepting it, sends Claire to the deserted house and once again plans to have his men kill her. Steele is again on the alert, however, and manages to save Claire's life after a desperate struggle.

This synopsis of the inceptive episodes of a serial presents a fair example of the type of play used in this kind of production. It is, of course, frankly melodramatic, built for the purpose of thrilling the spectator by swift action, hairbreadth escapes and tense conflicts. Pictures of this kind have wide popularity with certain audiences,

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and the writer who possesses technical skill, adroit plot ability, and a vivid melodramatic imagination does well when he studies the serial productions. There is always a demand for effective and unusual serials, and very high prices are paid for stories of this kind.

The situations that appear most prominently in the story are I, ("Supplication"); II, ("Deliverance"); X, ("Abduction"), and XXX, ("Ambition"), together with a slight use of XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), in the very beginning. The chief value of the plot as a combination of these situations is as an illustration of the logical development of not wholly convincing premises. If one will grant the existence of such a criminal as Dugan and the existence of so clever a detective as Steele the plot develops with reasonable logic. Occasionally, as in most serials, the long arm of coincidence is stretched, but on the whole the story progresses naturally and with effectiveness towards its conclusion.

It will be observed that the plot plan of the story is a relatively simple one. The complete serial contains fifteen episodes, each two reels in length. In order to hold the interest of the audience from one episode to another it is necessary to place the hero or heroine or both in a very tense predicament just at the end of the episode and then to cut the picture. You will observe that Dugan is attempting to get rid of Claire. This motive recurs in each episode, giving a kind of unity to the whole production. The end of each episode comes when the heroine is apparently in the power of Dugan. The next episode opens with Steele accomplishing her rescue.

Some one has said, with some degree of accuracy, that a serial plot is one that is self-propelling. That is, given a certain conflict of strong forces, such as the conflict between Dugan and Steele, so many phases of that conflict can be presented that the play may go on almost indefinitely. The danger lies, of course, in allowing the plot to become repetitious, tedious and slow in movement. Although the finished structure of a serial appears simple, its actual construction is a task requiring genuine technical skill.

"THE HELL CAT."

(Produced by Goldwyn; starring Geraldine Farrar; written by Willard Mack; directed by Reginald Barker.)

SYNOPSIS.

Pancha O'Brien, daughter of a Wyoming sheep raiser, is loved by Sheriff Jack Webb. There is another one, Jim Dike, a squaw man and a cattle rancher, who would possess her. She rebuffs him repeatedly.

At night he comes to the O'Brien ranch and shoots down Pancha's father. The girl puts up a terrific fight and proves that she is a veritable hell cat. Dike, however, carries her away to his ranch.

Dike's squaw steals into Pancha's room, intent on stabbing her; but when Pancha explains the Indian knows that it is Dike who must be punished. She dashes off to tell the sheriff. In order to win Pancha back to responsiveness, Dike offers to marry her and take her East. The girl consents.

On the way to Cheyenne Sheriff Jack Webb and his posse spring from behind rocks and cover Jim Dike with their guns. The cattleman sits in the buckboard, stiffly erect. The posse approaches. He topples over, dead, with the dagger Pancha had wrested from the Indian in his heart.

This melodrama of the West is based upon Situations I and II, ("Supplication") and ("Deliverance"); VI, ("Disaster"); X, ("Abduction"), and in the surprise ending XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"). It is useful as a typical melodrama of the kind that has been produced in large numbers against the background of the West. The feud between the cattlemen and the sheep barons, the squaw man whose squaw plays him false, the typical pursuing villain and the brave and noble sheriff-hero—these plot elements constantly recur in melodrama of this kind. There is distinctive

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novelty and dramatic tension in the manner in which Pancha kills the villain, but it is rather grewsome and fundamentally dependent upon the accident of opportunity she had to plunge the dagger into his back. It may be classed as an effective dramatic trick rather than as a logical and plausible use of dramatic material.

More and more the producers are avoiding melodramas of this type. The demand is for thoroughly novel stories of the West as it is, rather than for such sensational tales out of the past. In this case, the implausibility of the story lies in the character of Dike, who is an altogether typical villain.

The success and value of this picture depended more upon the acting and direction than upon the strength of the story, but it is only just to say that the direction was very fine and the acting exceedingly forceful.

"HER BRIDAL NIGHT-MARE."

(Christie Special Comedy in two reels; story by Ora Carew.)

SYNOPSIS.

The hero and heroine are about to be married when a jealous suitor of the girl hires a burglar to make away with the bridegroom's wedding clothes. The bride decides to commit suicide when the hero does not arrive and is then almost persuaded to marry the villain. The hero is arrested for being on the street in his B.V.D.'s, but after explanations at the police station he is given a uniform and allowed to go. The burglar learns of the wedding and steals the presents, and there meets the villain who had previously hired him. The hero returns and the villain is exposed and thrown out by the hero, who is then happily married.

The basic conflict of this story between the bridegroom and the jealous suitor might have led to a very amusing situation comedy, but the author and producers chose to make of it a burlesque and farce and relied upon the familiar "chase" of slapstick to provide most of the laughs. Burlesque and farce are becoming less and less popular, and there is no real demand for stories of this type. The comedy producers are desirous of polite, plausible situation comedies, preferably founded upon an amusing situation that might very naturally occur in the life of almost any spectator.

In this case the opening situation, a combination of XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior") and VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), provides a very good basis for a situation comedy with a universal appeal. As is often the case, however, the author allowed the plot to lapse into farce. One of the greatest difficulties in writing comedy is the difficulty of preserving the action upon the plane of straight comedy and maintaining it above farce and burlesque. It requires little imaginative skill to write burlesque, but to construct straight comedy one must be a very adroit craftsman.

"HER ELEPHANT MAN."

(Fox Production; story by Pearl Doles Bell; continuity by Isabelle Johnson; directed by Scott Dunlap; starring Shirley Mason.)

SYNOPSIS.

Little Joan Kennerly is left an orphan on the death of her father, a missionary in darkest Africa, and she is delivered into the care of visiting white men by the natives whom her father had taught. Among the white men are Philip Dorset, a rich young Englishman who is hunting big game while trying to forget an unhappy marriage at home, and Jeremy, the animal man with a circus, who is in Africa to buy elephants. They bring Joan to the United States, and when the child grows older she becomes an equestrienne in the circus, to which Philip also is attached as the elephant man. Believing her husband killed in Africa, Mrs. Dorset remarries. Philip learns of this, but takes no action, as a child had been born to the former Mrs. Dorset. A love affair develops between Joan and "her elephant man," and Philip

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quits the circus while arranging for a divorce. After more mishaps, Philip is free and returns to the circus, and in the end, following a terrific Kansas storm which wrecks "the big top," Joan and Philip meet to part no more.

Circus pictures, like the circus, are almost always popular, and in this case the author has not only written a very good photoplay of circus life, but has also created appealing characters, developed an unusual introductory romance, and complicated the plot with just enough unhappiness to give it the proper dramatic weight. The opening of the story, despite the fact that it takes place in Africa, is a very effective one, for the two important characters are introduced in an unusual and picturesque environment that furnishes a very natural prelude for the later circus life. The important characters are introduced, some suggestion of romance and future life established, and then the story opens under the Big Top, progressing naturally to the end. The sub-plot involving the hero's first wife is in itself timeworn, but it serves well to develop his character and to present an obstacle to his love for Joan. It should be observed that his attitude when he learns of his first wife's marriage is novel because it is combined with his new love.

The situations that occur in the plot prominently are VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), a slight form of IX, ("Daring Enterprise"); XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), and XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love").

There have been many circus stories written and produced in the past and most of those written by beginning photoplaywrights follow more or less closely the exhausted formula for such stories. But there will always be some demand for really good circus stories and the writer who is familiar with this subject and this locale should endeavor to make his work as distinctive, in characterization and plot, as "Her Elephant Man."

"HER GREATEST PERFORMANCE."

(Produced in England for Triangle; starring Ellen Terry; author and direction not credited; a typical star vehicle.)

SYNOPSIS.

A favorite actress who has retired from the profession is anxious to see her young son elevated to stardom and visits the theatre to witness his great triumph.

Flushed with success the young man carelessly leaves his mother to go home alone, where she lives with her son's fiancée. The son celebrates with the boys at the club and afterwards becomes involved in cards and drink. During this time the son strikes a man who is afterwards killed by another man who is wealthy.

The son is sentenced to ten years in prison for manslaughter. There has been an eye-witness to the killing, however. Blackmail silences her for awhile, until on her death bed she confesses to the retired actress that the wealthy man had committed the crime that her son had been convicted for.

Then the great actress is called upon to render "Her Greatest Performance." She makes herself up as an exact likeness of the dead woman and demanding in that character more hush money from the wealthy man she leads him to actually confess the crime in the presence of hidden witnesses.

And her son is free to join his mother and wed his fiancée.

The situations upon which this story is based are XXI and XXII, two forms of sacrifice, and upon XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), embodying the well-worn circumstantial evidence.

The story is particularly useful as an example because it involves the very hackneyed plot idea of a man being sent to prison for murder because another person had been killed after being struck or threatened by the protagonist. This idea has been used so very often that it is thoroughly timeworn, and it is fundamentally dependent upon chance and should be avoided. The story further involves the idea of a dying

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confession by a witness of the crime, and an enforced confession by the villain himself. And the use of disguise to obtain the confession is also very hackneyed, although in this case it was somewhat allowable because it suited the talent of the leading actress. But dying confessions, circumstantial evidence and disguised characters are three very timeworn plot devices, and if this story had not been written to provide Miss Terry with a suitable role it would probably never have been produced. The fundamental triteness of the plot makes it all the more valuable as an example, and it should receive the careful attention of the many writers who frequently make use of these same hackneyed plot ideas.

"HER INSPIRATION."

(Produced by Metro; starring May Allison; story and continuity by George D. Baker and Tom Geraghty; directed by Robert Thornby.)

SYNOPSIS.

Harold Montague, a young playwright, is told by the manager that his latest opus lacks proper atmosphere and as it is a moonshine story, Harold takes himself off to the Kentucky mountains, there to meet the originals of the counterparts of his play. sees him making progress in a romance with Kate and does not like it at all. Big Hank and Loony Lige—and last, but not by any manner of means least, with Kate Kendall—a wild mountain crew all of them—just the right people to contribute to Harold that atmosphere he needs to put his play over.

Of course, the moonshiners regard him suspiciously, particularly Big Hank, who sees him making progress in a romance with Kate and does not like it at all. Big Hank tries to interpret every move made by Harold as that of a revenue officer. The others, however, accept him for what he is. Loony Lige, a half-witted and self-constituted guardian of Kate, nurses a hatred for Big Hank that is augmented into a fury when he sees him trying to kiss the girl. He threatens to go for the revenue officers and give away the secrets of the illicit still.

Soon after, twelve revenue officers arrive. Harold, not knowing who they are, directs them to the hiding place of the moonshiners. Big Hank sees him and decides that he must hang. He is only prevented by the arrival of Looney Lige at the head of the band of officers. After this, Harold decides that he has atmosphere enough and that he must return to the city, because it would never do to marry an uncouth girl of the mountains, no matter how much he loves her. As he is watching the rehearsal of his play the manager requests that he meet the leading lady—Kate Kendall, who strange enough, was also seeking atmosphere.

This comedy drama is basically a combination of Situations II ("Deliverance") and XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"). Its plot is by no means novel, either in theme or treatment, and it lacks the sound foundation of the comedy drama we considered before, "Happy Though Married." It has little relation to reality and the absence of theme is noteworthy, but as an example of the photoplay with the "trick" ending it is useful.

The same story, so far as the fundamental plot and the surprise ending are concerned, has been produced and written many times before. It is the familiar tale of adventures of misunderstood and misunderstanding characters among moonshiners or other outlaws. It is doubtful whether a story of this type will again gain much popularity, for the surprise is no longer surprising, and the average sophisticated spectator can see through such a plot very quickly. In general, it is very unwise for the author to try to keep a secret from the audience, and this is especially true in five-reel photoplays. Very, very seldom is the secret kept, and when it is, as in this case, it is apt to be surprising for the moment, but it will lack conviction. Always the dramatist should remember that one of his primary aims is to produce the illusion of reality, and plots should be avoided which do not advance that aim.

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In short photoplays, of one or two reels, or in one-act stage plays or short stories such a technical trick is allowable, for suspense of this kind can be maintained for a brief period of time. But in longer and more serious efforts, they are almost always ineffective and should be used with care and keen analysis.

"HIP-HIP-HYPNOTISM."

(One-reel Gayety Comedy; story by Jack Jevne; featuring George Ovey.)

SYNOPSIS.

George cannot eat because he has not paid his board bill, so he retires to his room and blows his trombone. One of the other boarders throws a book at him, which he then discovers to be a work on hypnotism. He quickly masters its principles and sets to work to hypnotize the landlady into believing he has paid the bill. She, thinking he has lost his mind, gives him food. Everyone thinks he is a fraud, even his sweetheart, but when a burglar enters the house and has everyone cowed, George subdues him by foul means and then claims that he has him hypnotized. All the other boarders apologize for thinking him a fraud, and his girl tells him that whether or not he is a fraud he has her hypnotized.

This very short comedy is founded entirely upon variations of Situation XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"), and follows a simple and familiar formula. A sympathetic character claims to be able to do a certain thing; no one believes him; he accomplishes a certain end by a quite different means and thus becomes a hero. This same formula has been employed many times in short comedy and it is usually effective when it is treated in a slightly new way. The use of hypnotism in this case gives it a clever unity and makes plausible the farcical basis. In the same way, however, the formula has been used with a hero who claimed to be an expert at jiu-jitsu, at poker, at winning women, at baseball, at drinking, at speaking a foreign language, etc. The amusing recoil inherent in such a plot, the sudden victory of the unappreciated character, the humbling of the skeptics combine to give the formula a sound basis, but it should be remembered that only when it is treated in a really distinctive way, with many human and amusing incidents, can it be considered worthy of production.

"INFATUATION."

(Produced in France by Eclipse; starring Gaby Deslys; written by Marcel L'Herbier; directed by Louis Mercanton.)

SYNOPSIS.

Flora Nys, a poor flower girl of Paris, faces hard times. Her rent overdue, Le Baron, the landlord, oppresses her and puts before her a shady proposition. Indignantly she orders him out of her room. When she takes up her flowers, preparatory to going forth to sell them, she discovers that Le Baron has trampled on them. Tempted by her poverty, she steals a fur in a department store. Le Baron sees her and follows her into the street, where the girl, conscience-stricken, throws it away. Le Baron picks it up and follows her to the home of Paul Bernard, an actor, who every year gives a Christmas party to certain poor children of Paris. Bernard redeems the fur and, attracted by Flora's loveliness, asks her to become his wife.

In time Flora becomes an expert dancer and leading woman at Bernard's theatre. Gray Stanton, a wealthy rounder, attracts Flora. He endeavors to entice her away from her husband, in which task he is assisted by Le Baron, who harbors revenge. On the night of the opening of a new production, Flora deserts the theatre, influenced by a trumped-up story regarding Stanton's injury. She discovers the lie and returns to Paris to discover that her husband is suffering from an attack of brain fever occasioned by her flight. She devotes her time in efforts to bring back his memory and finally when another Christmas rolls around she dons her old clothes and sits before the open fireplace as she did when Bernard first met her. This has the desired effect. Bernard's memory is restored and he readily forgives the past when he learns the unhappy story of Stanton from his wife's own lips.

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Situation VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), which is a very convenient inceptive situation for stories of poor girls, opens "Infatuation." "Ambition" (XXX) follows, in Flora's desire to win happiness for herself, and with it is combined, XVII ("Fatal Imprudence"), in her theft of the fur. Le Baron is a very conventional villain, of the old familiar type that "still pursues" the heroine, but the interesting part of the story begins with Bernard's rescue of the girl, involving Situation II ("Deliverance"). Flora's desertion of Bernard is a case of XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"), and its effect on Bernard involves Situations VI and VII.

The story is a noteworthy example because of the use of the hackneyed idea we have already mentioned: the loss and recovery of memory on the part of one of the characters. The same idea has been used in almost exactly the same way many times, and although there is some psychological foundation for the recovery of the hero after seeing his wife in the same garb in which he met her the plot is so thoroughly hackneyed that its effect upon the spectator is doubtful. One knows, as soon as Bernard becomes ill, that eventually he will recover in some such way. There is, consequently, very little suspense in the story.

In the actual production, the characterization of the heroine and hero was so carefully developed that the plot was more convincing than it otherwise would have been. But the author should not rely too much upon skillful production; the story in itself should be plausible and convincing regardless of the kind of production it achieves. In general, the technical advance of the motion picture has been far ahead of the stories produced, and the intelligent producers are now seeking stories worthy of skillful and expensive production.

"THE INVISIBLE BOND."

(Paramount-Artcraft production; starring Irene Castle; story by Sophie Kerr Underwood; continuity and direction by Charles Maigne.)

SYNOPSIS.

Marcia and Harleth are happily married and live in perfect harmony until a designing young woman named Leila Templeton makes her appearance in their home. Leila is a flirt from the word go and she encourages Harleth to pay her marked attention at a dinner given by Marcia. This is the beginning of a misunderstanding between Marcia and her husband. They both realize their love for each other is great, but stubbornness on the one side and wounded vanity on the other finally brings a separation. Harleth then marries Leila and that fickle lady continues her flirtations with other men. One conquest of hers goes further than she anticipates and the man's head becomes turned. He gets her into an automobile and drives it over a cliff. Both are killed and when word reaches Harleth that Mrs. Crossey has been killed he thinks it Marcia and is almost distracted. But at her home he finds Marcia and his evident joy at seeing her safe fills Marcia with happiness, for there is no mistaking that what he leaves unsaid is love—the invisible bond.

The author of the novel from which this photoplay was adapted evidently had a dual purpose: first—to present a study of modern marriage; second—to entertain even thoughtless readers. Unfortunately both for the novel and the photoplay the two strands of this purpose never became blended into an interesting and integral dramatic whole. Even in the finished play it can be seen that the characters, at first real and human, are very soon made mere puppets in the hands of the author and director and made to perform their artificial and undramatic actions. This is especially noticeable in the accidental and artificial climax, which is used merely for the sake of the physical thrill with no thought of character motivation or of dramatic logic.

The story is of the sort that depends entirely upon characterization, for only by making the characters of the play very human and real can such a simple plot be given any significance for the average spectator. In Cecil De Mille's "Don't Change Your Husband" a similar group of characters was presented, but that director was skillful

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enough to keep them human and real in all of the action and to develop a story that was vital and significant in its application to the life of every spectator. The novelist can often give a degree of reality to characters that are quite unreal, merely by skillful writing and dialogue; but when such characters are brought to the screen they are revealed starkly as unreal and lifeless.

"Obstacles to Love" (XXVIII) in a form we have not observed before; "Erroneous Judgment" (XXXIII) and "Fatal Imprudence" (XVII) form the basis of the plot, but on obstacles to the love of a husband and wife a very interesting and subtle play might have been developed, with many opportunities for amusing situations. In this case, however, the author preferred to build a typical thrill climax, and so lost the opportunity to write an appealing and significant photoplay.

The subject matter of the story, dealing as it does with a form of the double triangle, will always possess a certain interest, and will always be the basis of effective drama. But the photoplaywright should guard carefully against the repetition of weak and undeveloped plots and should always strive for stronger and more unusual situations. And in dealing with such plot elements he should not forget that the whole vitality of the drama springs from the characterization; if that is weak the entire play will be unsound.

"THE JOYOUS LIAR."

(Robert Brunton production; starring J. Warren Kerrigan; continuity by Jack Cunningham; directed by Ernest C. Warde.)

SYNOPSIS.

Attempting to subdue a trio of auto crooks, Burke Harlan is himself subdued and upon recovery finds himself accused of being leader of the gang. He is put in jail and about to identify himself as a wealthy resident of Denver when he learns that an amateur criminologist wishes to take him into his home and reform him. And since the reformer has a pretty daughter, Harlan has no objections to masquerading for a time as the crook. Things go swimmingly until the reformer becomes alarmed over his daughter's deep interest in Harlan, who is introduced to her as a friend of her father's. The attempt to get rid of the "crook" is not exactly a "cinch" because Harlan is having too good a time to quit. He has also a purpose and that is to win Anne Warren, and he succeeds even in the face of the obstacles put in his path by a jealous detective who attempts to arrest him as a murderer. Harlan and Anne elude the police long enough to be married and in doing it make use even of the police patrol automobile.

In contrast to some of the comedy dramas we have considered in which the plot was too mild and too slight for screen purposes, this story by Jack Cunningham serves as a good example of the swift action, melodramatic, farcical romance. Mr. Cunningham is a practiced photoplaywright and his skill in telling a straightforward and exciting story in terms of the screen is demonstrated in this play. It will be observed that the play opens with swift and thrilling action, following the idea of the storm before the calm. The swift pace is maintained throughout the story, with enough calm for the love affair to develop pleasingly.

The plot depends upon a series of variations of two situations—"Erroneous Judgment" (XXXIII) and "Obstacles to Love" (XXVIII), with which is combined a slighter element of "Crime Pursued by Vengeance" (III), subdivision C—"Professional Pursuit of Criminals." With such a basis and with the interesting melodrama of the plot the story forms an entertaining photoplay, and a very good vehicle for the star.

"JUBILO."

(Goldwyn production; starring Will Rogers; written by Ben Ames Williams; directed by Clarence G. Badger.)

SYNOPSIS.

Hobo Jubilo, after witnessing a train holdup, finds employment on Jim Hardy's ranch. After being thrashed by his employer for shirking work, he becomes a valuable

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man and wins the liking of Hardy's daughter, Rose. Suspicion attaches to Hardy of complicity in the holdup because of his ownership of a partially colored white horse, resembling a steed used by one of the robbers. Bert Rooker, who was sentenced to prison by Hardy when the latter was a Justice of the Peace, manages to throw suspicion on the ranch-owner. Because of the love Hardy bore Rooker's dead mother he is trying to reform the youth. Rooker is severely beaten by Jubilo when the latter overhears him speak ill of Rose. Rooker visits the ranch, has an altercation with Hardy, pulls a gun on him, but is shot down by the rancher. The sheriff arrives. Jubilo tries to assume the blame for shooting Rooker. But the sheriff announces that one of his prisoners has confessed, implicating the wounded Rooker, and Hardy is cleared. Jubilo wins Rose and decides to wander no more.

Although the sheer plot of this story is of the melodramatic and rather conventional Western type, with a touch of mystery in its unfolding, the photoplay was on the whole a delightful and amusing comedy drama, with just enough dramatic tension and pathos to make it a well-rounded entertainment. Again the treatment rather than the theme or the plot gives the story unusual life and vitality. The author has drawn a very human, likeable and interesting character in the hobo, Jubilo, and the charm and humanness of the characterization lifts the play far above the ordinary. A less skillful author and director would have made the story a typical Western melodrama, but in this case the character brings out the heroism of the apparently unheroic. Someone has said that the secret of success in writing is to present an average human character and then to place him in predicaments that will compel the sympathy of the spectator. This formula, if such it may be called, is practiced with great skill in "Jubilo."

Various phases of "Erroneous Judgment" (XXXIII) and "Self-Sacrifice for Kindred" (XXI) enter into the plot, the first serving as the basis of the mystery, which is skillfully maintained in a secondary way throughout the five reels.

As an example of human characterization combined with sufficient melodramatic thrills to furnish dramatic entertainment "Jubilo" is of value. More and more the producers are coming to recognize that melodramatic stories must be given unusual characterization or comedic treatment if they are to be plausible and realistic. This play serves to illustrate how a relatively hackneyed Western melodrama can be made human and real by good characterization.

"OVER THE HILL"

(Fox production; all-star cast; adapted from Will Carleton's poem by Paul H. Sloane; directed by Harry Millarde.)

SYNOPSIS

The prologue of this story represents a simple, realistic picture of the home life of "Mother," "Father," and their children, who are still young. The action then jumps to twenty years later, when "Mother" is being neglected by her married sons and daughters. Johnny, the "scapegrace" of the family, who alone remains in the old home, finds that his father has been stealing horses, and suffers a jail sentence in order to save the guilty old man. "Mother" wanders from the house of one child to another, unwelcome, until the eldest son allows her to go to the poorhouse. Johnny returns from prison, learns where she is, and severely punishes his hypocritical brother. He re-establishes the tired little mother in the old dwelling, and he and his sweetheart look after her comfort.

Of the many "mother love" pictures that have recently appeared on the screen, "Over the Hill" is a dramatic and well constructed example. It builds logically to an intense climax: Johnny's rescue of his mother from the poorhouse. The prologue is narrative but it is so skillfully compiled that every inch of the footage holds the spectator. In this portion of the play, the opportunity to introduce comedy incidents, light satire, little mirth-provoking touches, is utilized to the best advantage. After the beginning, the comedy element is notably lacking, and unnecessarily so, but the light and shade of the prologue is thoroughly satisfying.

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The mother-love theme is the predominant element during the entire course of action. It is the unifying idea. In comparing this photoplay with "Mother O' Mine," it is interesting to note that the same theme is used in both, but in the latter it is given only momentary importance as motivation for the first sequence and for the climax. In "Mother O' Mine" the melodramatic action—the murder of the antagonist, the condemnation of the boy, etc.—submerges the theme temporarily, so that the story on the whole is really the boy's, not the mother's, as in "Over the Hill."

The construction of "The Old Nest," another photodrama dealing with the same type of material, approaches more nearly the construction of "Over the Hill," but the major situations are less dramatic, less logically worked out. An anti-climax of a "dream" is used, that seems forced and melodramatic. There is not the consistent progression of situation from situation that makes the plot of "Over the Hill" compact.

In an analysis of the plot, it may be well to examine, first of all, the violation of the law of unity. Were the prologue to be eliminated, a great deal would be lost. As in "Humoresque," the simple scenes of the family life during the childhood of the sons and daughters are among the most valuable, the most entertaining portions of the picture. Because of this, the lack of unity is justified.

One of the strongest situations used is IV ("Vengeance Taken for Kindred Upon Kindred"), which comes with intense, startling emphasis when Johnny makes his brother pay for his hypocrisy and ingratitude. "Mother's" experience is based largely upon VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"). Johnny's assumption of his father's guilt brings in XXI ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred"). The conclusion depends upon XXXIV ("Remorse"), which is made poignant because of the filial relationship.

The ingratitude of children is a theme which has been recognized as dramatic since it was immortalized by Shakespeare in "King Lear," and before that. There is strong human interest in it, rooted in the fundamental, universal sentiment of parental love. A photoplay with such a powerful thematic value has a far greater chance for success than the one which lacks a significant motivating idea.

"THE LION AND THE MOUSE."

(Produced by Vitagraph; adapted from Charles Klein's famous stage play of the same title; starring Alice Joyce; directed by Tom Teriss.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens at a meeting in New York of directors of a great railway system called to consider a "ruinous" injunction issued by Judge Rossmore. John Burkett Ryder, reputed the richest man in the world, and, correspondingly, powerful and unscrupulous, presides, and assures his railway colleagues that within a year Judge Rossmore will be off the bench—impeached. And Judge Rossmore is a man of fine attainments, moderate fortune and irreproachable character.

At the same time, in Paris, Shirley Rossmore, his beautiful daughter, is making a reputation writing stories and happy in the love of Ryder's only son, Jefferson, when newspapers tell of the impeachment of her father and summoning her home. Jefferson, ignorant of the genesis of the charges, pledges his father's aid in vindicating his sweetheart's father. Ryder marshaled his minions and his millions. Shirley had only her wits and her love—love of a sweetheart and of a father being crushed to disgrace and death by this Octopus. And Right triumphed over Might, and the Mouse brought the Lion to his knees.

This famous play is based upon three strong and interesting situations. Situation XXIV, ("Rivalry between Superior and Inferior"), is directly expressive of the central theme, the rivalry between the man of Might and the girl of Right. Situation XXIX, ("An Enemy Loved"), enters the story as soon as the hero's identity is revealed, and XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), quickly follows it. In the actual production, the first sequence of scenes shows the heroine in Paris, and the beginning of a romance

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is developed between her and the young man. The action then starts in New York, showing the Lion in his den, planning the disgrace and downfall of the honorable judge. The revelation that the lover of the girl is the son of her enemy is thus established early in the story, and since it is the premise of all the subsequent action, there is nothing implausible in it.

The story is simple in plot, but intensely dramatic. The stage play was a continued success through many seasons, and probably earned more royalties for its author than any other American play. It is based upon a profound and sympathy-compelling theme, and is constructed so dramatically that it holds the spectator's interest throughout. As an example of a good theme, developed with striking characters and with a strong plot, this story is of practical value. It is impossible to convey the subtlety of the actual conflict of wills in a brief synopsis, but the readers who have seen the picture will recall it as a good example of drama.

It will be observed that in this case, as in one other we have considered, the political and financial background is not allowed to become a part of the story. The conflict is definitely between Shirley and Ryder, and it is a very human and emotional conflict. Ryder's desire to ruin the Judge politically and financially is merely the premise of the story, but the producer wisely eliminated uninteresting and undramatic details of political and financial intrigue.

"THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME."

(Goldwyn production; starring Jack Pickford; from the novel by John Fox, Jr.; directed by Wallace Worsley.)

SYNOPSIS.

Chad, a mountain waif, comes to the Valley of Kingdom Come, where he works as sheep-herder for the Turner family and is taught by the village schoolmaster. Later, in Lexington, he meets Major Buford, who recognizes him as a possible relative, and under whose tutelage he becomes a typical southern gentleman. During a sojourn in his former mountain home, he tells Melissa, who is devoted to him, that he is in love with Margaret Dean, daughter of a neighbor of the Buford's. When war breaks out, Chad is appointed lieutenant in the Union army. Major Buford and the Deans are for the southern cause. Although fate thus pits him against his benefactor and the girl he loves, matters are straightened out when peace is declared. Chad wins Margaret, and Melissa returns to the mountains.

In this story, adapted from a long and leisurely novel that presents a biography of the hero, we find many of the familiar plot elements of Southern stories. The mountain waif, in reality of good family, who becomes a gentleman and falls in love, and is then separated from his sweetheart by the misfortunes of war, is a character that has appeared in many novels and short stories. The lapses of time necessary to the depiction of the central character as boy and man, the lack of thematic unity, and the indirect plot progression combine to render the novel rather weak as a photoplay. It really contains sufficient material for three five-reel productions, which, when used in one picture, becomes diffusive and undramatic. There were moments of genuine drama in the play, but, as a whole, it lacked the unity and integrity required to produce a single dramatic impression upon the spectator.

Situation XXIX, ("An Enemy Loved"), is the dramatic foundation of the play, and with it are combined Situations VII, XX, XXVII, and XXXV. Traces of novelistic technique are discernible in the finished photoplay, and in all probability it would have been impossible to have adapted this novel with the same dramatic skill as in the case of "The Right of Way," which we shall consider later.

There is little demand for stories of the Civil War, both because the material has been used very often in the past and because it requires expensive production.

It should be observed that there is no definite, clear-cut dramatic triad in this story, which is one of the chief reasons for its lack of dramatic unity. The story starts with Chad, Margaret and Melissa—Chad in love with Margaret, Melissa in

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love with Chad, and Margaret as yet an unknown quantity. A strong story might have been developed upon the basis of such a triad, but very soon the action in this case swerves to another triad and then to a third. As a result, there is no well-defined dramatic objective and no strongly organized dramatic structure.

The play contains, therefore, examples of several errors to avoid in writing for the screen.

"LIVE SPARKS."

(Brunton production; starring J. Warren Kerrigan; story by Carolyn Sayre; continuity by Jack Cunningham; directed by Ernest Warde.)

SYNOPSIS.

Live Sparks, a romantic young millionaire, so named because of his wild but harmless adventures, receives a wire from his Texas representative which causes him to suspect that his oil associates are defrauding him. He goes to Texas, and there finds that Abbott and Craig have, with the assistance of a Mexican tool, caused his land to appear worthless by piping the oil from it to their own gushers. He is assisted in unearthing the trickery by a beautiful girl, who remains nameless and who causes "Live" to forget his mercenary fiancée in the city. By playing upon the weakness of the Mexican's sweetheart, "Live" secures evidence of the fraud and prepares for the arrest of the crooks. In a fight that ensues, the father of the unknown girl is killed and his children placed in "Live's" care. Being helpless, the girl—really the daughter of the man who dies—goes to the city with her five brothers and sisters to ask aid from Mr. Sparks, thinking him to be a venerable old man. The romance is brought to a happy ending by the city girl breaking the engagement.

This story is another effective example of the romantic comedy drama with an undercurrent of melodramatic action. This combination of rapid and thrilling action with humorous and romantic characterization is usually very effective on the screen, for it provides parts of the two most pleasing kinds of entertainment—humor and melodrama. The chief objection to the old-fashioned melodrama of the Drury Lane school is its exaggerated and unreal characterization; often the plots of such melodramas are very interesting. But modern writers have learned to combine melodrama with humor, and have carefully avoided the tendency towards farce and burlesque. The result is pleasing, human entertainment of the type provided by "Live Sparks."

In this case the whole story springs from the central character. It is a very clear example of a character suggesting a plot to the author. Mrs. Sayre probably knows just such a boy as "Live" Sparks, clean, wholesome, reckless and adventurous. First of all then she drew her character, one that almost any young star would desire to portray and almost any audience find interesting. Then she placed him in a definite form of Situation IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), when he goes to investigate the frauds of his Texas representatives. With this situation she has combined "Enigma" and "Obtaining", (XI and XII), giving considerable suspense to the plot. The heroine wins our sympathy by "falling prey to cruelty and misfortune" (VII) at the death of her father, when she is left with the other children to support. Then the hero wins us by his kind offer to care for the dead man's family, Situation II, ("Deliverance"). Situation I, ("Supplication"), enters the story in the girl's effort to ask aid of Mr. Sparks, combined with a humorous element of "Erroneous Judgment", (XXXIII), in her belief that Mr. Sparks is an old man.

As in most romantic comedy dramas, the characterization and the clever treatment of incidents adds a great deal of charm and color to the story. The basic situations form a plot outline of dramatic strength, but in addition, the author has skillfully supplied the story with lifelike and interesting incidents—all essential parts of the story—and has so given it the warmth and color of real life.

The story is novel in its characterization and incidents rather than in the fundamental situations, but it serves as a very good example of this type of play, which is likely to meet with continued favor because of its human and dramatic appeal.

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"THE LOST CITY."

(Warner Brothers' Serial in Fifteen Episodes; story by Frederic Chapin; directed by E. A. Martin.)

SYNOPSIS.

Stanley Morton, young millionaire, and his friend, Mike Donovan, ex-pugilist, go on an aeroplane trip to Africa in search of big game. They reach a village ruled by slave-trader Gagga. The latter's warriors return from a raid with prisoners, among whom is Princess Elyata, whose father is king of the city of Tirzah, inhabited by whites, in the interior. She repulses Gagga's advances. Morton and Donovan are thrown into the lion pit by Gagga. Momba, an elephant who dances to the music of Donovan's mouth organ, rescues them. They in turn rescue Elyata from the pit by means of a rope thrown from their aeroplane. They head for the jungle, are obliged to land for lack of gasoline. Gagga pursues them, they are recaptured and escape again. The pursuit continues hotly, while wild beasts and all the dangers of the jungle threaten them on every hand.

The story of this serial production is a good example of the "animal stunt" photoplay. Like most serials, it is extremely melodramatic, but in this case the plot is given a thrilling romantic interest by the selection of situations and plot material. The mysterious city of the whites in the heart of the jungle, the conflict between blacks and whites, the princess in distress and the daring young American adventurers—these fundamental plot elements are of the type that appeal to all lovers of romance, providing they are given some semblance of reality in the production.

The story is a very simple one, and frankly romantic, but it involves a rather unusual use of Situation IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), and subsequently Situations II, ("Deliverance"), V, ("Pursuit"), and forms of VI, ("Disaster"), enter into the play to give it melodramatic thrills.

Because of the use of Situation IX, the story is more novel than most serial photoplays, and it serves admirably as a basis for the many thrilling and unusual stunts that were accomplished in the production. The success of such a serial depends, however, more upon the skillful direction and the novelty of the incidents than upon the basis of the plot itself.

"THE THREE MUSKETEERS."

(Douglas Fairbanks production; starring Douglas Fairbanks; adapted from the novel of Dumas by Edward Knoblock; directed by Fred Niblo.)

SYNOPSIS

D'Artagnan, a noble but impoverished youth from Gascony, comes to Paris to join the King's Musketeers. On the first day of his arrival, he finds himself involved in three duels with members of the corps and wounds them all. He then turns around and helps them to resist arrest for dueling, and is hailed as comrade by the trio. Falling in love with the niece of the landlord where he lodges, he is asked by her to help the Queen recover a diamond brooch which the royal lady has given to the Duke of Buckingham as a pledge of affection. The jewel was given to her by the King, and Cardinal Richelieu, who knows it is in the English nobleman's keeping, has planned to ruin the Queen by suggesting to her royal spouse that he command her to wear his gift at the coming state ball. The Duke has gone to England with the brooch, and D'Artagnan goes after it. The Cardinal learns of his mission, and tries in every way to prevent its accomplishment. Aided by the three Musketeers, D'Artagnan gets across the channel, recovers his jewel and returns to the palace just in time to save the Queen's reputation. Accepted by Constance and admitted into the ranks of the Musketeers, D'Artagnan is supremely happy.

The screen version of Dumas' immortal romance, with its spirit of high adventure, may be considered as one of the high-water marks of cinematic achievement. The combination of a dramatically sound and absorbing story, with superb acting and

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almost perfect production makes it a thoroughly artistic accomplishment. The whole "atmosphere," which serves as a background for the action—especially the quaint French settings—allows for remarkably fine photographic effects. The "illusion of reality" is given by each of the characters from the impulsive, lovable D'Artagnan himself down to minor personages, such as the ladies and gentlemen of the court. The drama is comprehensive enough to embrace an interplay of almost all the human emotions. The various elements are, furthermore, so firmly knit together that the story resolves itself into a compact, unified whole. Suspense, pathos, humor, intensity—no one of these is lacking. Unlike those of a good many "adventure" stories, the characterizations here are so vitalized that the spectator is just as much interested in what the characters *are*, as in what they *do*.

The initial situation, after several sequences of introductory action, is VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), when the Queen finds herself placed in such a serious predicament, owing to the machination of the Cardinal. Most of D'Artagnan's action is based upon XX ("Self-sacrifice for an Ideal"), the causal situation leading finally to II ("Deliverance"), which is effectively brought about, after a long period of suspense. XXX ("Ambition") plays a considerable part. But the major situation—the one which is the groundwork for the exploits of D'Artagnan and his fellows, is IX ("Daring Enterprise").

For two thoroughly practical reasons, there is a strong prejudice among producers against costume or "period" plays. First, this type of play demands, usually, a far greater expenditure than the ordinary picture, in consideration of the elaborate costuming, settings, and the cost of research work that is necessary in order that anachronisms may be avoided. Second, the producing of this type of play is much more highly specialized and complicated, and, in spite of all the precautions of producer and of director, it is almost impossible to attain perfection of detail.

The student must take this into consideration in his selection of material. If, however, he has a story which possesses strong enough dramatic quality to overcome this objection, there is no reason why he should refrain from writing it, just because the market is limited.

"LUCK IN PAWN."

(Paramount-Artcraft production; starring Marguerite Clarke; from the stage play by Marvin Taylor; continuity by Alice Eyton; directed by Walter Edwards.)

SYNOPSIS.

Annabel Lee longs to be a painter and as she shows some degree of talent, her mother skimps more and works more in order to send the girl away from the farm to the city to study. The venture is discouraging and Annabel reaches the point where she is undecided whether to go on, so she goes to consult a famous artist for advice. At his hotel, which is a very fashionable place, Annabel meets a satiated though very respectable young multi-millionaire. This chap falls in love with Annabel on sight and insists upon her remaining at the hotel a while. Richard's mother is so overjoyed at seeing her son so cheerful that she joins him and persuades Miss Lee to stay over. But as Annabel has no money, she does not know how to arrange it, so fate takes a hand and she hears a plot regarding a diamond tiara and gets in touch with the pawn broker, who is himself anxious to get into society and he finances the venture, which culminates when Richard, in high determination, sweeps away all obstacles and has his mother agree to his marriage to Annabel and then gets the charming young lady's promise to be his wife.

Like many stage plays of the light romantic sort this adaptation suffers from a very slight and undramatic plot, which, in the actual production, was only made effective and interesting by very skillful direction and acting. The story could serve well in a stage play, embellished with amusing dialogue and effective theatrical scenes. But it is entirely too slight for a five-reel photoplay.

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The two basic situations are "Ambition (XXX) and "Obstacles to Love" (XXVIII), which are relatively undeveloped in this case. If the author had been skillful enough to develop the plot without the assistance of Fate and without the melodramatic touch he has used to "thicken" the plot, the story would have been a much more suspenseful photoplay and one better suited to the excellent direction and acting it received.

It should be noted, however, that there is an effective use of comedic recoil in the situation of "Obstacles to Love." First the mother of the tired young millionaire desires the heroine to interest him, hoping thereby to interest him in other girls, and then she opposes their marriage. Such a contrast in character leads to a mild and amusing degree of suspense, without which the plot would have been still weaker.

If a writer has an inceptive situation of this kind he should exercise all possible ingenuity to develop it to its full comedic and dramatic power. The use of the Rule of Three, emphasized elsewhere in these pages, will be most helpful in such a case.

The plot weakness of adaptations of this kind has led the producers to see the value of original stories, written for the screen by writers with a thorough understanding of the screen's needs. The photoplaywright should not, therefore, expect to duplicate similar weak plots and expect them to be salable as original photoplays. Instead, every effort should be made to develop the plots to their full dramatic and comedic power.

"MANDARIN'S GOLD."

(Produced by World; starring Kitty Gordon; story by Philip Lonergan; continuity by Lucien Hubbard; directed by Oscar Apfel.)

SYNOPSIS.

Betty Cardon is a bridge fiend, and, moreover, she is not a good hand at the game. Her losses mount and mount until, finally, her husband, Blair, finds himself unable to keep pace with them. He asks her to stop, but the fever is in Betty, and she can not. She goes in debt to Geoffrey North, a man of wealth, who admires her as the beautiful woman she is. But even he demands his dues, and when Betty learns what he expects, she suffers a revulsion of feeling. How is she to get out of her predicament? How is she to pay these notes and again be free?

In the Cardon household there is Cherry Blossom, a little Chinese girl to whom Betty had given refuge when she learned that her father had made arrangements to sell her to Li Hsun, the Mandarin. The Mandarin had often approached Betty, weighing bags of gold in his hand, offering her small fortunes if she will but give up Cherry Blossom, but Betty had always remained firm and true to her promise to protect the girl.

Now, as she sits in her chair brooding over her losses, with Li Hsun's last note in her hand, she wavers and decides to give up the girl to a horrible fate. The plans are made, all she must do is to give the girl to the Mandarin's messenger. And this she does. She receives in turn the gold with which she pays her debt, and then the full horror of her act dawns on her. She rushes to the Mandarin to save Cherry Blossom and arrives while he is torturing her to give up the man she loves for him. She refuses, so she is killed, and with her her lover. Blair Gordon has gotten on the trail of his wife and breaks into the Mandarin's den with the police. The police shoot the Mandarin as he attempts to escape and with his dying breath he tells of Betty's deed. Blair denounces her.

Then Betty awakes in her chair with the final offer from the Mandarin still in her hand. With a glad cry she realizes it has all been a dream, and when her husband returns from business she confesses all to him and promises to stop her gambling.

Another story of the sensational type, in this case relieved by the hackneyed method of revealing the entire action as part of a dream. The heroine first suffers

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"Disaster", (Situation VI), which also involves Situation XXII, ("All Sacrificed for a Passion"), which in turn is followed by the "Necessity of Sacrificing Loved Ones," (Situation XXIII), and by "Remorse," (Situation XXXIV).

The story is noteworthy because it gives a rather unusual version of the familiar tale of a heroine who borrows money from a villain and is then called upon to pay the price. By combining with this hackneyed material the colorful and picturesque Chinese counter-plot, the author has succeeded in supplying the star with a brilliant role. Because of the dream element, however, the action is quite implausible, and the average spectator would know almost from the beginning how the story would turn out.

Many writers, in developing the premise of this story, would have carried out the lady-in-debt theme in a conventional and hackneyed way, ultimately freeing the heroine from the villain by chance. Mr. Lonergan deserves a great deal of credit for the clever introduction of the Chinese counter-plot, but he might have used that element as the basis of a more logical and compelling story.

"A MAN'S FIGHT."

(Produced by United; starring Dustin Farnum; story and continuity by Tom Geraghty; directed by Thomas N. Heffron.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens in New York City, where the star portrays the role of an idle young man of wealth, who finally rises to the occasion when the big moment comes. A man whom he had previously quarreled with is shot during a scuffle with the hero's sister. Both brother and sister confess to firing the shot that killed, in order to protect the other.

The outcome is that the brother is sent to prison for a short term, and when released, he is disowned by his father and goes West to start anew. The sister goes into a convent. The young man's fight for the independent copper interests in Arizona brings him into politics, and when about to grasp victory, he is confronted by his past as a convict.

A very pretty young girl is his stenographer. And she is just as smart as she is pretty. It is this young girl who finally appears in the big town hall and takes such a leading part in the big scene which carries the hero success and clears the name of both himself and his sister.

And this brings order out of chaos and leaves the hero and heroine to enjoy their well earned happiness.

This story is a rather conventional and commonplace Western melodrama, based upon familiar and somewhat ineffective plot material. The opening episode, dealing with the mutual sacrifice of brother and sister, involves Situation XXI and Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"). Situation XXIV, ("Rivalry Between Superior and Inferior"), is used in the conflict between the hero and the copper interests, but it is not nearly so dramatic as most uses of this situation. In this case there is no tense, human conflict of wills. The conflict involves uninteresting political questions of little dramatic value, and mob scenes which are also less dramatic than more restricted action.

The opening episodes of the story are not directly related to those that follow, and the construction of the story is therefore rather artificial. The imprisonment of the hero, for example, depends upon the very timeworn use of circumstantial evidence, and it is mechanically injected into the plot for the sole purpose of recurring at a later point. There is a lack of fine logic and an almost total absence of theme in the story. By providing an heroic role for the star, it is of value. But its emotional and dramatic appeal is so slight that it serves as a good example of what not to do.

Political and financial rivalry is invariably dull on the screen. The imprisonment of the hero is a conventional means of awakening sympathy, now almost exhausted. The part the sister plays in the story might easily have been eliminated,

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for it is of no dramatic interest and the convent scenes are not appealing. On the whole, the opening episodes of the story are so conventional that they might have been eliminated without loss and the story could have opened in the West. Then, if the political and financial element had been removed, and the hero placed in a predicament where he would have a real man's fight on his hands, rather than a political contest, it would have been more appealing and effective.

"MARKED MEN."

(Universal production; story by Peter B. Kyne; continuity by H. Tipton Steck; directed by Jack Ford; starring Harry Carey.)

SYNOPSIS.

Harry, Bill and Tom are held in a state penitentiary for a train robbery. Tony, their pal, aids them in escaping. Later Harry is found in Trade Rat, where he has met and become interested in Ruby Merril. When his pals arrive, they plan a last big robbery on the bank, but a posse is hot on their trail, and after Bill has been killed, the other three find themselves in the desert without water. They come upon a wagon and a woman who has just given birth to a son. She dies and begs the three men to be the baby's godparents. The baby brings out all the tenderness in these men, and they care for it lovingly and return to the nearest town with it. Tony and Tom die en route, and Harry plunges on with the baby, even willing to be caught and sent back to jail that the baby may live. In a small town he staggers into the dance hall and finds himself face to face with Ruby and the sheriff, who has followed her. The sheriff informs Harry he must arrest him, but when he learns that it was his own sister who died and left the baby, he obtains a pardon from the Governor. Harry and Ruby and the baby take up a peaceful life together.

The theme of the regeneration of a man has long been a popular one, but seldom has it been used with so great a degree of realism and dramatic power as in this photoplay. The situation (technically a combination of I and II, Supplication and Deliverance), which starts the play, is a very gripping and dramatic one. In this story, again, the situation itself and the plot develop from the characterization. Given the three "marked men", rough, uncouth and hardened by suffering and crime, bring them before the miracle of miracles—a new-born and motherless babe—and genuine drama is bound to result. The basic situation is in itself an inspiration, offering splendid opportunities for both drama and comedy of a human and appealing kind. It would be difficult to find a better example of a really tense and poignant dramatic situation than this one.

"Self-Sacrifice", (XX and XXI), plays an important and dramatic part in the story, which later involves another form of "Deliverance" in the pardon of the hero.

Basically, this story is a Western melodrama, but the distinguished author has given it such a human and dramatic foundation that the melodrama of the superficial plot is lost in the poignance of the real conflict. The producers, as has been said before, have come to realize that some such human characterization or exceptional comedy relief is necessary to the success of a melodramatic plot.

Perhaps no better example of a Western story could be found than this, but situations like the inceptive ones of this play are indeed very rare and usually spring from real experience and a deep understanding of life and its forces.

"MARRY ME."

(One Reel Christie Comedy; story by Jack Jevne.)

SYNOPSIS.

"Marry Me" is a satire on the leap year proposal in which the "lead," Bobby, is a chap who scoffs at the idea of girls proposing. Just to prove that he is wrong, his chums conceive the scheme of having Vera Stedman pop the question. Of course, she is not in earnest at first, but when she sees another woman taking advantage of leap year by proposing to Bobby, she quickly decides that he is worth having after all.

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The subject of leap year proposals is one that many writers undertake, especially under the romantic influence of such a year. As a result, the studios have received many stories of this kind and the subject, unless very cleverly developed, is one to be avoided. As long as there are leap years, probably, it will be used, and with some degree of humor.

The construction of this simple plot is admirable, for it presents a clear and concise situation developed directly and dramatically to its climax. Only two situations are employed—XXXII and XXXIII, ("Mistaken Jealousy" and "Erroneous Judgment"), both of which are used in a human and amusing way.

As a technical example, quite aside from the subject matter, this story illustrates the proper construction of short comedies.

"MARY'S ANKLE."

(Thomas H. Ince production; starring Douglas McLean and Doris May; adapted from May Tully's play by Luther Reed; directed by Lloyd Ingraham.)

SYNOPSIS.

Doc Hampton is out of funds. Uncle George has promised him a large sum if he will marry. His chums persuade him to send out fake wedding announcements. Mary Jane Smith, whom he loves, lives with her aunt, an old sweetheart of Uncle George. The latter invites her and Mary on a voyage to Honolulu. He also requests that the latter look up Doc. She sees the Doc in his office, and after leaving, sprains her ankle, which he fixes. He persuades her to pose as his necessary wife. Uncle engages the bridal suite on the steamer for them. At the dock the Doc's chums lose their nerve and tell the truth. Mary and Doc save the day by announcing that they intend having the captain marry them at sea.

This story is more nearly a farce comedy of incident than of situation, for its plot is too slight in situational strength for a five-reel photoplay. With the elimination of some incidents and subtitles, the same story could have been presented in two reels. Because of the slight plot, it was necessary to pad the production with many incidents and many titles from the play. The result was a farcical sequence of incidents, funny in themselves, but the play as a whole lacked the integral strength screen plays should have.

In small degrees, Situations IX, I, II and XXXIII enter into the story, but none of them is developed to its full power. There have been many short comedies written and produced upon similar plot premises, and in the one or two-reel length such material is amusing and effective. Produced in five reels, there is a great danger of slow action (which is deadly to farce), the necessity for too many titles, and ineffective crises. If this story had been originally written as a photoplay many more complications and situations would have been developed, and the play would have possessed a more dramatic structure.

It is only fair to say, however, that a skillful scenario, clever acting, and direction, made the most of the material. But the same skill in production applied to real photoplay material would have led to still better results.

Farce is generally so dependent upon titles, so implausible in its basic situations, and so difficult for an actor to convey in a silent medium, that it is unwise to write it for the screen. To a greater degree than any other dramatic medium, the screen requires stories that will convince the audience of their reality. It is possible to convince an audience for one or two reels, but it is most difficult to maintain credulity for the hour required to show a five-reel picture.

"THE MIRACLE MAN."

(Paramount-Artcraft Special; featuring Thomas Meighan and Betty Compson; story by Frank L. Packard; stage play by George M. Cohan; continuity and direction by George Loane Tucker.)

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SYNOPSIS.

Three men and a beautiful woman compose a group of crooks, who are operating in New York's Chinatown. The chief of the gang reads a short news item in the daily paper, which states that several apparently miraculous cures are being performed by an old hermit in a small village up-state.

When they learn that the old patriarch is blind and deaf they conceive the idea of capitalizing the credulity of those who seek by faith to be cured by this miracle man. They establish themselves in his household and by imposition and good fortune, augmented by skillful publicity methods, they manage to rapidly acquire a fortune. But in the meantime, the heaven of the old miracle man is having effect on the hearts and souls of the crooks.

A strong love element develops between the leader of the crooks and the beautiful woman member. One of the gang, known as "The Dope", discards his drugs and wins a little country maid, and the other member of the gang acquires a grey-haired country mother.

It is to be hoped that every student of the photoplay has seen "The Miracle Man", for it is a splendid example of a vital and interesting theme dramatically developed, with characters in remarkably effective contrast. The story is essentially simple, as great stories are apt to be, and the continuity of the production is a thing of rare excellence. As an example of dramatic technique, it is doubtful if any other motion picture has been so well constructed and so subtly developed. In discussing Situation X, ("Abduction"), we have already considered this photoplay as a manifestation of the rescue of a soul in captivity to error. In fact, it presents four distinctive characters of major importance and several minor ones who are rescued by the sublime faith of the Miracle Man. It is well to observe that the story deals entirely with the struggle between the forces of good and evil for the possession of the souls of men. Every detail of the action has its direct bearing upon the central theme, and the plot progresses inevitably from the moment the leading crook reads the clipping in the newspaper that throws him and his comrades into contact with the Miracle Man. There are no false notes, no unnecessary or nonessential side issues. The action is straightforward, direct and objective, and truly dramatic in its emotional effect.

Although the rescue of souls in captivity to error is the basic situation of the plot, Situations XXXII and XXXIII, ("Mistaken Jealousy") and ("Erroneous Judgment"), also enter into it, and there is a very dramatic use of the idea of Pardon. In fact, Pardon plays so large a part in the thematic conclusion of this story that it would be justifiable to place it as a separate Situation.

The genesis of this story probably lies in the contrasting characters, for almost every detail of action is an inevitable expression of the contrast of character. Let us place ourselves in the position of the author. Suppose we had really known a man like the patriarch of this story, a kindly, far-seeing, gentle, mystical old man who had done so much good that he was considered a miraculous healer. Suppose we wish to illustrate the struggle between the forces of good and evil. The Miracle Man is the personification of the forces of good. On the other hand, we must have those who personify evil. A group of criminals is perhaps the most likely contrast. But they can not merely be criminals; they must also be real and human characters, and for the purposes of illustrating the theme, they must be as evil as possible and yet with the inherent worth that can later develop. The author created four such characters: a clever, handsome and likeable leader; his girl; a weakling, who has become an opium fiend; a wretched fake cripple, who contorts himself to play upon the sympathy of the philanthropic. Each of these characters is real and living, and the author introduces them in their natural environment, New York's Chinatown. The opening scenes illustrate their characters and establish the background and the theme of the story. Then the action definitely starts when the leader of the crooks reads a news-

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paper item referring to the Miracle Man. As soon as the Miracle Man and the opposing group of characters are brought together, there is tense, dramatic action, leading inevitably to the abandonment of their former habits by the crooks and the triumph of good.

The Chinatown episode of this story might be objectionable if it were used merely for the sake of sensation, but its use is legitimate because it leads to the full expression of a significant and vital theme of inspirational value. In a story with a less appealing theme, the character of the morphine fiend, for example, would be objectionable. In general, the drug habit and similar subjects should be scrupulously avoided, for they possess no entertainment value.

A careful study of this production will illustrate the comments on theme and characterization and dramatic technique that have been made in the introduction. The author who strives to create stories as tense and appealing as "The Miracle Man", even though they are based upon totally different themes, will go far in his profession, for it embodies virtually all of the qualities an effective photoplay should have.

"MOLLY AND I."

(Fox production; starring Shirley Mason; story by Frank R. Adams; continuity by Isabel Johnson; directed by Howard M. Mitchell.)

SYNOPSIS.

Shirley Brown becomes interested in an author, Philip Smith, through his writings. She learns that he is blind and penniless and unable to afford a trip to Italy, where a well known oculist could cure him. Shirley will come into possession of a legacy on her wedding day, and in order to help her idol, she proposes that he marry her, explaining that she is an old maid and desirous of a husband. Philip marries the girl, and in Italy his sight is restored, while Shirley waits for his return. When he comes back to America, however, he takes up his life in the artists' colony and ignores the fact that he is married. Shirley dresses herself as an Alsatian girl and begs to become Philip's servant, not letting him know her true identity. In time Philip comes to love the girl. Another woman attempts to interfere with the affair and separates the lovers for a while, but Philip only comes to understand how truly he loves Shirley. Then he learns that the little girl is his wife and the two are reunited and made completely happy.

The story material of this photoplay, adapted from a very short novel which was padded by clever dialogue, is only sufficient for two reels. The failure of this production results from stretching the very slight plot through five reels of cute mannerisms on the part of the star. The blindness of the hero, Shirley's care of him, and their marriage, provide a very good basis on which to build a photoplay, and the characterization of the original story was well-developed. But the producer and the scenario writer evidently did not perceive the true dramatic value inherent in the characterization. They have adapted material that should have been used, if at all, merely as the basis for a strong and well-rounded photoplay.

On the whole the plot is better suited to fiction than to the photoplay, for it is very implausible that the hero should be so stupid as not to recognize, even though blind, the charming heroine. The blind are not lacking in other sensibilities, and only in a brisk and clever narrative, which would keep the reader from analyzing the plot basis, could this material be made effective.

Situation II, "Deliverance," and a very slight use of XXVIII, "Obstacles to Love," form the basis of the play. The analysis of the situations is sufficient to indicate the story's lack of dramatic and screen value, and it also shows the absurdity of adapting unsuitable material to the screen. It is of further value to the student as an example of a mild, undramatic, uncomplicated kind of a play that can not be made effective on the screen and should therefore be developed in a totally different way.

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"MORE DEADLY THAN THE MALE."

(Paramount-Artcraft production; written by Joseph Gollomb; continuity by Julia C. Ivers; directed by Robert G. Vignola; starring Ethel Clayton.)

SYNOPSIS.

Helen O'Hara, actress-manager, meets Richard Carlin just as he is getting ready for a trip to Zululand in search of adventure. Carlin delays his departure, is introduced to Helen's husband, Terrence O'Hara, and accepts an invitation to visit her at her mountain camp. Carlin goes, Helen leads him on to embrace her. Terrence appears and challenges Carlin to a duel. It takes place and Terrence is wounded. A dam near the village bursts and Carlin, who has just learned from Helen that she met him during their college days and loves him, rushes with the girl to the dam, where they succeed in replacing the logs. Carlin kidnaps Helen in his auto and reaches the yacht, which is waiting for him. The police patrol prevents the yacht from sailing. Carlin jumps overboard and is stunned. He recovers to find himself in a bed in Helen's camp. He finds that Terrence is Helen's brother and that she planned the scheme to keep him from going abroad. Carlin decides to remain at home and with Helen.

This photoplay presents an interesting combination of romantic melodrama and comedy. The idea of a man asserting that he has to travel to the ends of the earth for adventure and a girl's efforts to show him that adventure is everywhere to be found is by no means a new one, but in this story it is given very clever treatment, especially in the surprise climax. Although the plot is light and rather absurd, it possesses so strong a vein of humor and such romantic, swift action that it engrosses the interest of most spectators. As an example of the clever treatment of a melodramatic idea, by which the thrill of the melodrama is relieved by pleasing human comedy, it would be difficult to replace "More Deadly Than the Male". This type of play, combining the two most popular kinds of plots, will always be effective, but the student should not be deceived into believing that it is a simple thing to give a melodrama such a comedic twist. It requires very skillful treatment and a genuine sense of humor and comedy values on the part of the original author.

The situations that form the plot structure are "Daring Enterprise" (IX), "Abduction" (X), and "Mistaken Jealousy" (XXXII). The first of these three is used with especial effect and in an unusual way, but the others are employed conveniently. The novelty of the surprise ending and the cleverness of the play depend upon the well-contrasted use of "Daring Enterprise".

In the actual production, as in most successful comedy dramas, there were many clever notes of humor that enlivened the play and held the interest of the spectators. In the climax, for example, in variation from the usual and stereotyped lovers' embrace, the author of this story had the lovers vanish from the scene and then a parrot in the room squawked exultantly: "He kissed her! He kissed her!" Throughout a story of this kind the author must endeavor to create little touches of humor and human action that will make an appeal to the eye of the spectator; but all of these minor details must fit naturally and plausibly into the plot pattern if the play is to be really effective.

"NO BABIES ALLOWED."

(One Reel Christie Comedy; story by Jack Jevne; featuring Jimmy Harrison and Dorothy Devore.)

SYNOPSIS.

"No Babies Allowed" deals with the youthful couple who are unable to find an apartment house because of the objection to children. They almost give up in despair when they resort to camouflage and gain admittance by employing a tradesman to carry baby up in a basket. The busy, snooping landlord causes the parents to deposit the infant on the dumbwaiter and it is taken to the orphan asylum. After many difficulties and adventures they get the child back, and at the picture's end we see them building their own house.

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This short comedy presents a clever satire on the objections to children of some apartment house owners, combined with an amusing story of the troubles of a young couple. There have been many stories written around the same idea of "No Babies Allowed," but in this case the idea was used skillfully and with many novel incidents that provoked laughter. The loss of the child involves a subdivision of Situation VI ("Disaster"), with which is combined XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment").

The story may be considered as a good example of one-reel comedy, although in its climax it lacks the suspense and tension even a short photoplay should have. A one-reel comedy should progress briskly from one amusing situation to another and should move directly towards the climax, maintaining suspense until the last moment of the play. This ideal is not always attained, by any means, but comedies founded upon clear and interesting conflicts usually lead to such climaxes.

Perhaps the real weakness of the climax lies in the fact that it offers no genuine solution of the predicament. If the young couple could build their own home, they would not have had to search for an apartment. But what about the spectators who are in the same predicament and still find it necessary to pay rent to a Pharaoh-like landlord? A good photoplay, even a short comedy, should present a solution of its basic predicament.

"NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH."

(Taylor Holmes production; starring Taylor Holmes; from the novel of the same name by Frederic S. Isham and the stage play by James Montgomery; directed by David Kirkland.)

SYNOPSIS.

Robert Bennett, a society idler, wagers with his three friends that he can tell the truth and nothing but the truth for one week. His troubles commence at a house party given by Mrs. Ralston. The wives of his friends pick him out and question him about their husbands' doings away from home. He is forced to tell the truth with the result that divorce proceedings are started. His friends try to force him to quit. He refuses. They incarcerate him in an insane asylum, but he escapes with the aid of the Baby Vamp, who considers him a gentleman burglar. Things become quite complicated when a real burglar enters the scene. The time limit for the bet being up, Bennett is allowed to square his friends and win Gwendolyn for his bride.

"Nothing But the Truth" was a very readable light novel and the stage farce supplied an amusing vehicle for Willie Collier. In the screen version Taylor Holmes scored an individual triumph as a farceur, but the plot was so very slight and farcical that it could not hold the interest of the audience. There have been many stage farces developed from the same premise of a wager of an amusing kind. In this case the wager is especially well chosen because of its satiric reflection upon the practice of truth telling. Starting with the very same basic idea a skillful photoplaywright, recognizing the need of objective action and a strong plot, might have worked out a really successful comedy. In this case the use of the incarceration of the hero in an insane asylum, the illogical and unnecessary entrance of the burglar at a convenient moment, and the very slim plot, all give the story a frailty that is evident when it is shown on the screen. Produced in the two-reel length, the story would be very amusing and entirely adequate, but in five reels the inherent weakness and lack of conflict makes the play dull and slow in movement. It is impossible to sustain interest in a farce throughout five reels unless the material is so ample that it can be played in a swift and comedic tempo.

A farce requires more situations in quick succession than any other kind of photoplay. The events must occur breathlessly and unexpectedly, and one situation must always seem to be crowding out another for a place in the action. The difficulty of finding an inceptive situation strong enough to furnish so many complications is the basic reason for the failure of most farces. In this play, however, there is a very

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good basis, but the authors dealt so entirely from the standpoint of the novel and the stage that the story did not undergo the translation to the screen without losing most of its humor.

Only two situations enter the story in any degree: "Daring Enterprise", (IX), used in a satiric way, and "Erroneous Judgment", (XXXIII). The play, therefore, serves as an example of a very amusing idea used unsuccessfully in the photoplay; although the wager premise has been sadly overdone in the past it would be worth while to attempt the construction of a farce along these lines and to develop it to its full comedic power, with sufficient situations to carry the action throughout five reels. Only by actual practice in the construction of stories, even if you go no further than to write a plot outline, can you acquire technical facility in the use of situations.

"NURSE MARJORIE."

(Realart production; starring Mary Miles Minter; from the play by Israel Zangwill; continuity by Julia Crawford Ivers; directed by William Desmond Taylor.)

SYNOPSIS.

Lady Marjorie, the only daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Donegal, shocks her parents by entering a sanitarium and becoming a nurse. She enters hospital work with a will. A little lame boy, Dick, is one of her patients and the other is John Danbury, a member of the House of Commons, who has had an operation on his eyes. He falls desperately in love with Marjorie, but she devotes most of her time to Dick. To prove John's love, Marjorie pretends she is the daughter of a fish peddler, and she asks him to call at her home. She then obtains the assistance of Biddy O'Mulligan, who poses as her mother. John is undaunted and persists in asking Marjorie to marry him, in spite of the fact that his people are ready to disown him. Finally, Marjorie reveals her real identity to John, who then refuses to marry her and ruin his career. However, when the two families get together, John is made to realize the importance of the alliance and all ends happily.

This adaptation of Israel Zangwill's stage satire of English caste prejudices contains enough romance to be pleasing on the screen, but it is so deficient in the other qualities of a successful photoplay that it can not be considered as suitable photoplay material. As a stage play it proved interesting and amusing through many seasons, but there is no apparent reason for its adaptation as a photoplay other than the author's name. And Zangwill, for all his writing, is no better known to the average spectator than Julia Crawford Ivers, who wrote the scenario.

The story is so entirely British, and has so little bearing upon the life of the average American, that it can not provide intelligent entertainment except in its romantic sequences. And there is so little real action of dramatic value in the story that it can not be told on the screen without the use of many subtitles and inserts. Danbury's fear of marrying the girl of the nobility because of his career is not an objective conflict that can be made clear in pictured action.

Situation VIII, ("Revolt"), is used in an interesting way in the beginning as an introduction of the heroine. But it is quickly dropped and the major portion of the play depends upon XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), combined with XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"). The lack of dramatic action is therefore apparent from the situations, and as a result the story shows its stage origin and its unsuitability for the screen. The photoplaywright with a similar plot premise should build a more complicated and dramatic plot, and one that can be made clear to the spectator by means of screen action.

"ON WITH THE DANCE."

(George Fitzmaurice production; released by Paramount; adapted by Ouida Bergere from the play by Michael Morton; directed by George Fitzmaurice.)

SYNOPSIS.

Sonia Varinoff, a little Russian girl; Peter Derwynt, a southern architect; Lady Joane Tremelyn, an English peeress; and Jimmy Sutherland, a rich, uncultivated west-

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erner, are thrown together by the eddyings of the melting pot of New York City. It is natural that Derwynt and Lady Joane, with high ideals and cultivated tastes, should be mutually attracted, but Sonia, who after her father's death, becomes Derwynt's ward, is a disturbing note in their happiness. She loves Derwynt herself, and finally seizes an opportunity to compromise him before Lady Joane, to save him for herself. Lady Joane breaks off the engagement, and at her mother's earnest behest, marries Sutherland, who has nothing but his money to commend him. Unhappiness results on both sides, and Derwynt and Sutherland seek solace in the company of each other's wives. Derwynt surprises Sonia dancing for Sutherland in her own home, and throws out the visitor. He later learns that she is dancing, masked, in a public place, under the auspices of Sutherland. He kills the latter and is put on trial. When it seems that there is no hope for him, Sonia rushes to the courtroom, a voluntary witness, and to save her husband, blackens her own character. Derwynt is acquitted, and Sonia, realizing that his love belongs to Lady Joane goes to drown herself, but is saved by Van Vechten, Derwynt's friend and advisor, who later marries her, while Derwynt marries Lady Joane.

The idea of bringing four widely different characters together and allowing them to work out their destinies and conflicts forms the basis of this story. With such a basis the plot development depends entirely upon the logic of the characterization. Although from the brief synopsis here quoted, it would appear that the killing of Sutherland is somewhat forced, in the actual production the characters were very clearly delineated and it seemed perfectly natural. The melodrama of the climax is relieved by the irresponsible, irrepressible characterization of Sonia (played by Mae Murray), and by the idealism of Derwynt and Lady Joane.

It is worth while to observe that the inceptive situation and the four characters, with slight changes, could have led to a romantic comedy drama. Such a play might have been more logical and less artificial and it is likely that it would have made a still wider appeal to the public.

"Erroneous Judgment" (XXXIII), used in several different forms, "Fatal Imprudence" (XVII), and "Self-sacrifice for Kindred" (XXI), enter the plot of the story.

It is rather difficult to make use of four characters of almost equal importance in this way and to reach a dramatic conclusion. Even in this case, the author found it necessary to drop one from the cast and to restrict the major conflict within the dramatic triad. The "double triangle", as the use of two overlapping groups of characters is called, may often be employed effectively in comedy drama in which the plot involves "Mistaken Jealousy" (XXXII).

From the brief synopsis not a great deal is learned of the characterization, but it must be remembered that only by quite unusual characterization could a plot of this kind be made effective. The character of Sonia, the rather wild Russian girl, is especially effective in contrast with the more reserved and staid Derwynt and Lady Joane. The value of the play largely depends upon character and character contrasts.

"THE OTHER HALF."

(Produced by Brentwood; all-star cast; written and directed by King Vidor.)

SYNOPSIS.

The picture portrays a medium-sized town, to which a captain and a corporal return to take up civil life after the late war.

They are great pals, but as the young captain succeeds his father in charge of most of the city's biggest industries, and the young corporal works hard as a machinist in one of his factories, their paths lead temporarily apart.

When the corporal is made foreman and requests certain repairs made at the factory to protect the lives of the workmen, the young captain, now hardened to senti-

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ment by financial environments, refuses. A falling wall buries the young corporal in the debris and temporarily blinds him and he apparently seeks justice in vain.

His hard working but breezy sweetheart sticks by him and becomes acquainted with the young financier's girl, who walks in the higher places. This wealthy girl's interest is so aroused that she refuses marriage with the young financier and attaches herself to a newspaper to help it editorially and financially. An article that she writes opens the eyes of the young financier and he sees the light. And the young corporal's eyes are also literally opened at the same time.

This story, like "The Miracle Man," deals with a vital and significant theme, and in a degree the same idea of miraculous healing is involved. This photoplay is more "preachy" and therefore somewhat less generally entertaining than the example we have just considered, but the human quality of its conflict is genuinely dramatic. It is a simple, small-town story, dealing with social readjustments after the war, and it carries a real message to the spectators. Situation VIII, ("Revolt"), VI, ("Disaster"), and XXIV, ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior"), form the backbone of the plot. Again the interest lies in the theme and characterization, rather than in plot complexity or tricky technique. The story is simple and direct, but the human appeal is sufficient to hold the interest throughout its action.

The subject of the conflict between capital and labor is in general unsuited for screen portrayal, but in this case it is made valuable because the conflict manifests itself clearly in the two central characters. The industrial background is properly subjected to the human conflict of wills, which is the proper concern of the dramatist.

"The Miracle Man" and "The Other Half" illustrate the sentence we have underscored in Part I. *Until we have writers who are concerned with Theme, we shall not have genuinely satisfactory photoplays.*

"PAID IN ADVANCE."

(Produced by Universal; starring Dorothy Phillips; suggested by a story by James Oliver Curwood; written and directed by Allen Holubar.)

SYNOPSIS.

A beautiful young girl is persuaded to accept a position in Dawson City to act as nurse. Her employer is the unprincipled owner of the notorious dance hall and tells her that all the dance hall girls are called nurses up there. She is frantic.

Forced to choose between becoming his mistress or throwing her lot with the other dance hall girls, she makes a big decision and offers herself to the highest bidder. Many thrilling fights and intensely dramatic scenes are registered throughout this fast moving production, and this was but one of the big moments.

The "cur" of the camp wins her in the auction by offering his valuable claim and outbidding all the others. But the "cur" is also the coward of the camp, and when threatened by the proprietor, he cravenly yields possession of the girl. She ignites the slight spark of manhood in the "cur" when she scornfully taunts him by crying, "Oh, if you were only a man."

This awakens him, and then things happen in real lively fashion. He cleans out the dance hall in short order in his anger, and after that he manages to redeem himself so that he is worthy of the girl who had grown to worship him with a great love.

There have been many Alaskan melodramas written and produced which have involved many of the same plot elements of this story. Although the plot can not be considered as original or novel, it is a very well-rounded and thrilling melodrama of its kind, with excellent opportunities for tense dramatic acting and for legitimate thrills. In this case it is the treatment—the dramatic structure—of the play, rather than any inherent worth, that makes it effective and interesting. Combined with good direction, picturesque backgrounds, and a good scenario, the well-organized plot

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furnishes excellent entertainment of its kind. Really worth-while Alaskan melodrama will perhaps always be popular in some degree, but most writers err in attempting this kind of photoplay by devising weak and simple plots to place against the great background of the North. By the very nature of the scenic background, the plots of such stories should be more complicated and more thrilling than almost any other; it is impossible to conceive a quiet, simple story laid in such a locale, for the mind expects great events in a great country.

There is a wealth of situational strength and a wealth of incident and character reaction in the story, starting with the situation of "Erroneous Judgment," (XXXIII), by which Joan is suspected of causing the death of MacTeague, then progressing to Situation VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty and Misfortune"), when Joan comes under the power of Barker, and proceeding on to the very dramatic use of Situations I and II, ("Supplication" and "Deliverance"), when Joan sells herself to the "cur," who is the highest bidder. There are other lesser situations, but these four form the basic plot structure, and then the story ends, after a reasonable time lapse, with the reunion of Joan and her reformed husband. Possessed of quick and objective action, and developed through an interesting series of situations to a dramatic climax, this story is a very good example of a well-constructed photoplay. If, in addition, it had been given more authentic characterization and a more novel plot, it would have been a very great picture. But so far as plot construction goes, it is one of the best of the many Alaskan photoplays that have been produced. The student should study it especially to observe how skillfully the director has balanced his cast, in such a way that there is a chance for genuine drama at almost any moment of the play. With a cast so well chosen for dramatic contrast, it would be virtually impossible to write a dull story.

"HIS PARISIAN WIFE."

(Produced by Artcraft; starring Elsie Ferguson; written by Eve Unsell; directed by Emile Chautard.)

SYNOPSIS.

In Paris, Martin Wesley, a young American lawyer, meets Fauvette, a reporter on one of the city's newspapers. After a brief courtship, he marries her and then takes her home with him to his people in Boston. Wesley's parents treat his wife coldly. They look upon anything from the French city with a degree of horror, and though Fauvette has beauty, breeding and refinement, they instantly brand her as unfit company for the ancient New England stock that they are. This attitude of his parents towards Fauvette begins to take root in Wesley, finally, and he asks himself, "Might she not have a past, after all?" He shortly begins to treat her cruelly by sometimes ignoring her and sometimes asserting what he believes to be his rights as a husband.

On the night that Tony Rye, Wesley's friend, comes for dinner, Fauvette appears in a rather low-cut gown and this causes the cloud-burst. Wesley upbraids her. Afterwards Wesley leaves her to enable her to divorce him. Fauvette goes to New York and soon makes a success of writing. Her books bear the name of "Marie Trieste," as authoress, and she soon becomes widely known under this name. Wesley, who at first turned to drink to forget his wife, reforms and makes a name, winning an important law case. He decides to go to New York and lays a plan. He is well aware that Tony admires—even loves—his wife, and his plan is to win her back for himself and then tell her that she can go to Tony!

But when he again comes in contact with her, Wesley realizes more than ever that he really loves his wife. And instead of carrying out his ironical revenge, he begs for forgiveness and offers himself to her. So, each realizing their shortcomings, they arrive at a happy understanding at last.

This very human study of characters in reaction is based primarily upon Situation XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), with Situation XXIV, ("Rivalry of Superior

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and Inferior"), and Situation XXXII, ("Mistaken Jealousy"), in combination. The idea of vengeance also plays a minor part in the story, but it does not develop into dramatic action.

The story is an excellent example of what may be done with very simple material. In this case the plot inevitably springs from the inter-relation of the characters. Given the French girl, the Puritanic young New Englander with his background of family life, and the drama is well established. Of all the examples we have considered, this story compares best with "The Miracle Man" in the quality of its character contrast. It lacks a great theme, but it deals humanly with a subject of timely interest, and it does possess dramatic appeal.

There is one element in the story that deserves especial attention—the success of the heroine as an author. In this case her success is plausible because she is introduced to us as a reporter on a French newspaper. The high literary standards of Parisian papers make her later literary success plausible. But many writers make the error of picturing a little country girl, or a small-town immature hero, with no previous training or experience, attaining a similar brilliant success. It is then very implausible. It should also be remembered that there is no vital dramatic interest in success itself, and it is only of dramatic value when it is the culmination of a dramatic struggle.

"THE PEACE OF ROARING RIVER."

(Produced by Goldwyn; starring Pauline Frederick; story by George E. Van Schaik; directed by Victor L. Schertzinger.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with a young working girl in a middle-west city, who is out of employment after a siege of sickness in the hospital.

Her doctor advises the country air and her landlady finally induces her to reply to a matrimonial advertisement apparently inserted by a lonesome mine-owner of Nevada. Then the scenes change to a Nevada mining town during the correspondence which followed.

It seems that the young post-mistress fairly hated a young mine-owner there because he spurned her attempts at making him love her. It was this woman who inserted the advertisement in the matrimonial paper, and it was this same post-mistress who appropriated every letter and answered it, signing the young miner's name.

The beautiful young working girl of Omaha finally pawns her mother's jewels to make a journey to Nevada, and one day when the young miner returns to his home he finds the young girl there with her trunk. He suspects a blackmail plot, and his actions frighten the girl, who shoots him. There are many stirring scenes from this point.

The girl quickly repents of her hasty action in shooting the man, but she had been all unstrung during the previous night's vigil when he was up in the mountains. She quickly secures the doctor, after a wild and hazardous trip, and is overjoyed to find that the wound is not fatal. The men of the town, and also the women, stirred up by the post-mistress, determine to run the "hussy" out of the town, but here is where the beautiful and much persecuted girl finally comes into her long deferred happiness.

The first situation in this story is again VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), which we have so often observed as an excellent inception of a photoplay. In this case it serves to win the complete sympathy of the spectator for the heroine. It is followed by IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), and XXIX, ("An Enemy Loved"). The third member of the triad is actuated by revenge (III), which later manifests itself in combination with XXXII, in the attitude of the townsfolk toward the heroine.

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The part of the story which concerns the young post-mistress is rather hackneyed and not quite plausible, for it involves the timeworn trick of intercepted letters and the character of the girl, unless it was very subtly suggested, is rather too cattish to be effective in drama. The matrimonial advertisement is also rather timeworn, for it has formed the basis of many comedy plots. In general, it is safe to say that the plot elements commonly found in comedy have been exhausted in drama. In this case, the very serious and sympathetic predicament of the heroine precludes the possibility of a farcical interpretation of the plot. But such stories require very careful production, and unless they are illustrative of a significant theme that is definitely dramatic, the author should avoid them.

"PICCADILLY JIM."

(Selznick production; adapted from a story by P. G. Wodehouse; directed by Wesley Ruggles; starring Owen Moore.)

SYNOPSIS.

The play is a farce dealing with intrigues of all sorts, but the main thread of interest is spun from the romance involving a young chap named James Crocker, an Englishman, and Ann Chester. Jim is known in London as Piccadilly Jim, and as a newspaper reporter there he gains considerable notoriety. Indeed, he makes such a name for himself that his Aunt in America determines to go to London and bring him to America. But Jim beats them at their game and proceeds to America alone. On shipboard he meets the girl. It is love at first sight. Also it is love with its usual complications, for Ann Chester hates a man she has never seen. His name is James Crocker and he wrote a merciless criticism of some poems of hers for a London newspaper. In New York all Jim looks for is an opportunity to be near Ann, so he contracts to do a little kidnapping job for her. Her cousin is eating and growing fatter by the minute, and she determines that the boy must be made to work, so Jim is to kidnap him and send him to a physical culture resort. Since Mrs. Pett is forever worrying that her son will be kidnapped, Jim's plot becomes the harder and his attempt fails, thanks to the detective Mrs. Pett has engaged. But Jim's suit for Ann's hand succeeds, so there is no cause for lamentation when the final scene arrives.

This play is a good example of an amusing, though somewhat frail, comedy drama of the farcical type. It is largely a sequence of farcical incidents, well suited to its original form as a magazine serial, but ineffective on the screen, especially in the climax, which occurs in a convenient and conventional way. It is the kind of plot that might easily go on forever and its climax occurs in simple accordance with the whim of the author to end the play and bring the story to a romantic conclusion.

The slender plot is suspended upon Situation XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), with which is combined a comedic use of the preceding situation, ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One"). Later an amusing form of Situation IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), in Jim's attempt to kidnap the heavily guarded fat boy, is employed. The many amusing incidents springing from this situation can easily be imagined, and they, indeed, formed the best part of the screenable action. The romance is secondary to the incidental humor, and the play was effective largely because the incidents were played in a rapid, farcical tempo, which in itself is conducive to comedic effect.

Farce is seldom effective on the screen when it is sustained for five reels. It is difficult to preserve a rapid tempo for an hour, and the audience usually desires moments at least of weightier drama. On the stage, with the rest between the acts and the advantages of the voice, farce is amusing. But the screen requires stories with more plot and with stronger situations. It is necessary, above all, to convince the photoplay audience in some degree of the reality of the play, and farce is quite as unreal as melodrama of the fantastic serial type.

On the basis of this same idea it would have been possible to have built a strong and suspensive plot, by combining other situations of a less farcical nature with those

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used. The romantic central character and the basic situation of "Obstacles to Love" should have supplied the author with an excellent premise. But like many adaptations of novels and plays, the plot is exposed in all its frailty before the truthful lens of the camera. It would be excellent practice for the student to build a stronger play from the same premise of characterization and situation, developing the plot along the lines of stronger and more compelling situations to a more suspenseful climax.

"POLLYANNA."

(United Artists production; starring Mary Pickford; adapted by Frances Marion from the novel by Eleanor H. Porter; directed by Paul Powell.)

SYNOPSIS.

Pollyanna, whose religion has always been "just be glad," goes to her Aunt Polly after the death of her father. The joy of her little soul changed entirely the inhabitants of the town, but it took quite a while before the spirit of gladness made itself felt upon her Aunt. Whatever Pollyanna did was wrong. No matter how hard she tried to please she always received a scolding. She endeavored to have her Aunt adopt little Jimmie Bean without success, so Pollyanna sneaked him into the cellar and fed him. Her spirit of gladness softened the heart of old John Pendleton, the rich man of the village, and later through an accident in which Pollyanna becomes paralyzed, the Aunt realizes, too, the value of this child's teachings and becomes sorry for the way she had treated her niece in the past. Pollyanna knew that she only could be cured by Dr. Chilton, a former sweetheart of her Aunt, and after much persuasion Aunt Polly swallowed her pride and asked Dr. Chilton to come to the house. Pollyanna was cured and little Jimmie Bean was adopted by the Aunt, and the whole village felt the benefit of the child's religion "just be glad."

The plot of this story is a very slight one, but it is founded upon a theme that appeals to the heart, and its incidents are both amusing and poignant. There are moments of genuine tension, of real drama, in the play, but the significant thing is the fact that every incident and episode bears a direct relation to the theme of the story. Without the theme—the playing of the Glad Game—the play would have been dull and uninteresting, and the theme alone is almost sufficient to guarantee a popular reception of the picture. Although the story bears traces of its novelistic origin, in the narrative manner of its progression, the unity of theme is so closely adhered to by the director and the scenario writer that a single dramatic effect is gained. The simplicity and the universality of the theme, the pleasing characterization of Pollyanna (in this case the central character is the human expression of the theme), and the interesting element of conflict supplied by those who will not play the Glad Game until Pollyanna convinces them of its worth, combine to make the picture a very great popular success.

A great deal more credit is due the producers, the director and the star, perhaps, than the original author, for the finished picture shows how carefully the process of elimination was practiced. The continuity writer very skillfully eliminated the non-essentials of the novel and *dramatized*, so far as was possible, the material of the book.

Various forms of Situation VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty and Misfortune"), a slight use of Situation XIII, ("Enmity of Kinsmen"), and another form of Situation X, ("Abduction"), subdivision D-3—"Rescue of a Soul in Captivity to Error"—enter the plot. It is not to be supposed, however, that these situations furnish the greatest strength or charm of the story, for as we have indicated, it depends largely upon theme, characterization and human incident. It is, of course, a very difficult thing to develop so simple a plot, which is another version of the ever-popular Cinderella legend, in this effective way, and the story indicates the importance of the intelligent use of a unifying theme, of distinctive and human characterization that properly expresses the theme, and of incidents that add charm and humor to the characterization and also emphasize the theme. A careful analysis of the production will show that each incident has a direct bearing upon the theme; this is the true test of

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dramatic unity. Most beginning writers would make use of incidents for their own sake, but would overlook the necessity of developing them in a cumulative, integral dramatic whole.

"THE PRODIGAL WIFE."

(Produced by Screencraft; starring Mary Boland; adapted from Edith Bernard Delano's novel, "Flaming Ramparts"; continuity by Eve Unsell; directed by Frank Reicher.)

SYNOPSIS.

Marion Farnham is the wife of a poor but ambitious young doctor who lives in a cheap lodging house in the city. Her greatest happiness is in her little four-year-old daughter, Marna. Her husband's constant neglect of her leads to discontent and she finally elopes with another resident of the house who has suddenly struck it rich, on the condition that he secure the child also. Deserted, the young doctor leaves the city and takes little Marna into the country, where, during the long years that follow, he creates in her an ideal conception of her mother. Marion's lover, not able to find Marna, reports her dead and so both mother and child grew older, each believing the other in another land.

Mrs. Farnham loses interest in life and sinks lower and lower. She hears of her husband's success in life and resolves to appeal to him. She arrives at his country estate when he is away and sees Marna. From her lips she learns what the girl thinks of her mother, and though yearning to clasp her to her breast, goes away without speaking her heart. Later, however, she secures employment with Marna, who has married Dallas Harvey, a young writer. She delights in caring for the baby that comes to bless the life of the young couple.

And it is soon that Mrs. Farnham is granted the opportunity to do her daughter a service. She finds that Marna contemplates eloping with a false friend of her husband's, even as she did years before, and by a recitation of her own life she prevents a duplication of the tragedy. Dr. Farnham hears all this and his heart goes out to the woman he now knows to be his wife, but the woman will not go back to him. To atone for her sins she goes out in the world that she may seek out and protect other young folk from treading the wrong path.

This story is one of the very few examples of photoplays in which sensational plot elements have been used in a really dramatic and significant way. The plot opens with Situation XVII, ("Fatal Imprudence"), and XXV, ("Adultery"), both of which are used for the definite purpose of pointing a dramatic moral. Situations XXXVI and XXXIII are involved in Marion's loss of her child and her supposition that Marna is dead. In this connection it is well to observe that the author has won the sympathy of the audience for her heroine even in the face of obstacles by emphasizing her love for her child. Many writers would have made Marion needlessly heartless and shallow, and the character would then have been dramatically valueless. Situation XXI, ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred") is the dominant note of the climax, and there is genuine dramatic tension in the manner in which the heroine saves Marna from the fate she knew so well. The author and the producer had the courage in this case to avoid a merely happy ending for one that is more logical and more inspiring. Marion's plan to go out into the world on a mission of good is infinitely more dramatic than any mere reunion of husband and wife might be, and it is a real, rather than a sentimental, solution of the predicament.

The time lapse divides the story into two definite parts, each of which is unified and interesting. There is, therefore, no loss of dramatic unity, and the very theme of the story requires such a division.

Although this production may be considered as a very fine example of a "sex" play, because of the poignant, human theme it expresses, the writer is cautioned against the use of similar material. In general, the producers are not seeking stories of this type. But if such a story *must* be written, try to make it as good as "The Prodigal Wife."

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"RED HOT DOLLARS."

(Thomas H. Ince production; starring Charles Ray; written by Julien Josephson; directed by Jerome Storm.)

SYNOPSIS.

Ted Burke, a worker in Peter Garton's iron foundry, is hurt while saving his employer from being crushed by a huge timber. Garton has him nursed back to health, adopts him and makes him an executive. Ted is in love with Janet Muir. The latter's grandfather and Garton are deadly enemies. Unknown to the grandfather, Ted obtains for Janet a position in Garton's office. Garton, not liking the intimacy between Ted and Janet, discharges the girl and Ted denounces the millionaire and quits. When Janet's grandfather learns what has happened he starts out to thrash Garton. Ted and Janet arrive in time to interfere. Ted berates both old men soundly for their obstinate prejudices against each other and they become reconciled, with happy results for the lovers.

This story may be considered as a typical Charles Ray vehicle, of no special novelty in theme or plot but developed in a human, humorous and pathetic way. The idea of the enmity between the two old men and the consequent obstacle to the love of the girl and boy, (Situation XXVIII), is of course as old as "Romeo and Juliet," although in this case it should be noted that the usual formula is violated, since the boy is not the son of either man. In other respects the story is a simple and by no means novel one. But it should be observed, to the author's credit, that Mr. Ray is supplied with a very human and pleasing characterization, that the story possesses a great deal of heart interest, a touch of pathos, and an amusing romance. Although it would have been a more dramatic story if other situations had been introduced, the skill with which the author has played upon the single theme and has produced a single dramatic effect with a minimum of material is very commendable. In this story, truly, the author has eliminated non-essentials and has concentrated upon a single idea.

The brief synopsis quoted above can only convey the basic plot structure, but those readers who have viewed the production will remember the many clever, amusing and human touches of action that endeared the characters of the play to them. It requires greater technical skill to develop a simple and uncomplicated story of this kind to the five reel length than to write almost any other kind of photoplay. In such a story it is the author's feeling for his characters and his deep understanding of their motives and ambitions and reactions to situations that lead to entertaining plays. Mr. Josephson, who wrote the play, is especially skilled in the creation of simple, human characters—he makes them live and breathe, and his gift for character is of more value, in its ultimate appeal to the spectators, than the power of some writers to devise thrilling but unreal situations. In Part I we have emphasized the value of studying character and of presenting in photoplays characters with whom you are thoroughly familiar. The best photoplays are those in which the characters are the most human, for if you can make an audience feel that it knows and likes a character, over half of the battle is won. It would be advisable to view productions of this type in order to observe how cleverly the continuity writer has presented his character in definite, dramatic, interesting *action*.

"THE RIGHT OF WAY."

(Screen Classics-Metro production; adapted by June Mathis from the novel by Sir Gilbert Parker; directed by Jack Dillon; starring Bert Lytell.)

SYNOPSIS.

Charles Steele, the cynic, the drunkard, the brightest lawyer in the town of Montreal, by his eloquence saves the life of Jo Portugais from hanging for murder. He marries Kathleen. Five years later he catches his brother-in-law embezzling money held in trust, but promises to save him. That night Steele visits one of his secret haunts where he can drink undisturbed. He is embroiled in a fight, receives a blow on

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the head, and is picked up by Jo from the river and taken to a little Canadian town, experiencing a loss of memory. A surgeon, visiting the village takes an interest in the case, performs an operation and memory is restored. He learns that he has been considered dead, and his wife has married another, and that the brother has thrown the blame of embezzlement upon his shoulders. Always an unbeliever, the kindness of the villagers causes a reformation to take place in the heart of Steele. During a fete a number of strangers visit the town and in order to safeguard the church money he keeps it in his safe. His brother-in-law, now a derelict, and two companions try to steal the money, but are prevented by Steele, who is shot by the brother whom he had befriended.

Stripped of its very interesting and universal theme—the inner conflict in the soul of a man who doubts God—and of the very subtle and finished character delineation of the star in the role of Charley Steele, this story is a rather commonplace and leisurely plot involving the ancient idea of loss of memory. It deals in an almost biographical way with the hero's life, following him through episode after episode as the novelist is privileged to do. Some of the episodes are genuinely dramatic and they all serve to emphasize the theme. On the whole, despite the hackneyed elements of the plot, the story can be called a very fine adaptation because, again, of the skillful emphasis of the theme. The theme is the one thing of great dramatic interest in the play, and the chief character, as in other examples we have considered, is the personal, human manifestation of the theme. In this way the story is given a unity and integrity that it could not otherwise have possessed.

It should be observed that in this story we again find that subdivision of Situation X, ("Abduction"), that deals with the rescue of a soul in captivity to error. It might be said that the purpose of Charley Steele's life experiences is to show him the way out of error—to give his innate idealism the "right of way" to a higher spiritual plane. His death in this story really signifies, in a most poignant and dramatic way, the beginning of a new life. Readers who have seen the production will remember the unhappy ending of the play much longer than if it had come to the usual romantic conclusion. Combined with the situation already mentioned are XXI, ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred"), XXXI, ("Struggle Against a God"), and XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment").

There is a very real dramatic significance also in the characterization. Steele is a cynic, an unbeliever, a drunkard, and yet we sympathize with him throughout the story. Examine the situations and the reason for this sympathy will be plain. He is a big, strong man, with an innate though concealed nobility, and he is making a strong fight. It would have been impossible to awaken sympathy for the character as he is first introduced if some such situations had not been used. A less skillful dramatist would have drawn a character with whom we could not have sympathized and would thus have destroyed the dramatic power of the story. As an example of unusual and complicated characterization this story will be helpful.

"THE RIGHT TO HAPPINESS."

(Produced by Universal; starring Dorothy Phillips; written and directed by Allen Holubar.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens in Russia with a Jewish massacre. Sonia and Vivian are the twin children of the American, Hardcastle. They are safely hidden and escape harm, though the former is separated from her sister and is adopted by a poor Russian family. Hardcastle returns to America with Vivian in the belief that his other child is dead. Twenty years elapse. Vivian is a popular member of society, with no knowledge of the social problem of the day. Sonia and her lover, Paul, have migrated to America as the emissaries of Lenine. The girl has no idea that she is not a Russian. So she takes up her duties to spread revolution. She is successful for a time until she appreciates the spirit of democracy abroad in the land.

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Meantime Hardcastle has not kept abreast of the times. He is obstinate against any solution for the working man. And the drama builds to an inexorable climax when his own daughter, Sonia, leads his workmen against him. A shot is fired. She is mortally wounded. And in her father's house she learns her identity. So Hardcastle's soul is purified. He offers his workmen the right to happiness by giving them decent hours and a living wage.

There is a great deal of dramatic tension in the climax of this story, when the Russian girl of the Bolsheviks meets her own American father and threatens him with death. The situation fundamentally depends upon chance, and is therefore somewhat artificial, but in a careful production it proved effective. The story is especially noteworthy, from the writer's viewpoint, because it involves this approach to Situation XIX, ("Slaying of a Kinsman Unrecognized"). "Self-sacrifice for an Ideal and for Kindred," (Situations XX and XXI), are also involved in the Russian sister's character. The theme is somewhat buried beneath the mechanical tricks of the climax, which involves the chance situation and the double exposure of the two sisters, but underlying the action there is a very interesting and timely theme. Its timeliness is more notable than its dramatic value, however, for like most other social (as distinguished from individual and personal) problems, the theme of Bolshevism is not satisfactory dramatic material. So many productions have recently been made dealing in one way or another with this idea that it is hardly wise for the photoplaywright to add to such stories. It is far better to deal with more fundamental human problems and with individuals who are distinctive and real, and not the mere expressions of political theory.

In this case, again, the time lapse divides the story into two definite parts, a prologue and the story proper. In stories involving life histories of the characters, such a division is necessary. But there is a great deal of difference between dividing a story into dramatic parts, and allowing a story to ramble leisurely, indirectly, and with many time lapses.

"THE RIVER'S END."

(Marshall Neilan production; starring Lewis Stone; written by James Oliver Curwood; directed by Marshall Neilan.)

SYNOPSIS.

Inspector MacDowell of the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police sends Conniston to capture John Keith, accused murderer of Judge Kirkstone. True to the traditions of the force Conniston follows his man for nearly three years, finally capturing him in the snow wilderness. Conniston, taken ill, is nursed by his prisoner. There is a wonderful resemblance between the two men. Keith tells Conniston how Judge Kirkstone and a gang of crooked politicians were threatening his old father with prison on a false charge, describes how he went to the Judge's house, quarreled with him in his son's presence, knocked him down and fled. Later, hearing that the Judge had died, he became a fugitive. Conniston believes him, knows that he is dying, and persuades Keith to return to MacDowell as the latter's officer. Conniston dies, Keith takes the narrow chance and reports Keith's death to the inspector. He passes muster, but matters are complicated by the arrival of the real Conniston's sister, Mary, from England. She also takes him for Conniston. Miriam Kirkstone, daughter of the dead Judge, is in the power of a Chinaman named Shan Tung, who has served the Mounted Force as an expert in identifying suspects. Shan Tung sees through Keith's disguise and the latter visits him in his Oriental den in the Chinese quarter. Shan Tung has Miriam's brother, an opium victim, in his power. The brother identifies Keith as his father's murderer. Shan Tung threatens unless Keith induces Miriam to come to him, he will expose him. Keith refuses, is attacked, but kills Shan Tung and fights his way out. The place catches fire. Miriam's brother is taken out dying and confesses that he slew his father. Keith wins his supposed sister for his wife and MacDowell is united to Miriam.

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This dual role melodrama of the Northwest is dependent upon Situations XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty and Disaster"), II, ("Deliverance"), XXXIV, ("Remorse"), and a slight suggestion of XXVI, ("Crimes of Love"), combined with XXXIII. It contains a plethora of melodramatic action because of the many situations and the involved groups of characters. In the six reel length it is suspensive and swift in movement, and it would have been impossible to have produced the story in the usual five reels.

The plot is quite conventional in every way, dealing with the familiar elements of dual role plays and Northwest melodramas. From the standpoint of structure, however, the play is very well organized, for it contains sympathetic characterization, pathos, strong conflict, maintained suspense and a thrilling climax. The skill with which the various strands of the plot have been woven together is especially noteworthy. As a technical example of a complicated and well-constructed photoplay it is of value, although the author might have produced a much better story if he had started with a genuine, instead of an artificial, theme.

"SHADOWS."

(Produced by Goldwyn; starring Geraldine Farrar; written by Willard Mack; directed by Reginald Barker.)

SYNOPSIS.

Muriel, popular in the social life of her city, marries Judson Barnes, a man prominent in the business world. He is approached by Frank Craftley, a dishonest mining promoter, who urges him to invest in a project in Nevada. Muriel feels that he is attempting to swindle her husband and advises him against entering the deal. Craftley realizes that it is the woman who is blocking his path and goes to his silent partner, a man who has traveled the world over, telling him that he believes he recognizes Muriel. When McGoff, the partner, produces a photograph of Cora Lamont, an Alaskan dance hall girl, Craftley realizes that Muriel is the same woman. He threatens her with exposure and as a result Muriel talks to her husband until he has again changed his mind about the mining project. With Craftley he sets out west to look things over.

Now it is that Muriel recalls her past in the Alaskan dance hall where McGoff attempted to make her his plaything. How she played the game safe, always promising, yet giving nothing, and how she made her flight from her sordid existence to the more civilized south, are events which come rapidly to her mind. Yet if all this past comes out—if her husband learns of it, she will be lost—moreover, her baby will be lost to her. McGoff has signified his intention of coming to see her to claim her, and Muriel, making ready for him, lays out her jewels as if to tempt a burglar.

When McGoff crushes her in his arms she shouts and warns the household. A policeman, rushing in, shoots and kills the intruder. To him and to the rest of the household it appears as if Muriel had merely surprised a burglar. Taking her baby in her arms, Muriel offers thanks for her safety.

This story was written by a master of melodrama, but Mr. Mack's skill failed to make real and convincing the two fundamental accidents on which his thrilling plot is founded. In the first place, it is a pure coincidence that a man who had known Cora in her dance-hall days should meet her husband and again come in contact with her. In the climax, secondly, it is largely accidental that the villain is killed as a result of her well-laid plan. The plan, like so many others, might easily and naturally have gone wrong. Muriel, or Cora, is simply lucky enough to be freed from the villain in this manner. Although such a climax might convince and thrill an audience at the time it is shown, it will not hold up under careful analysis. It also involves the question as to whether the heroine is justified in killing a man merely to save herself from disgrace. The finer and nobler thing would have been to confess to her husband her whole past.

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The plot involves Situation XII, ("Obtaining"), III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"), and a suggestion of XXVII, ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One"), combined with VI, ("Disaster"), and in the end, XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment").

To the student the story is significant especially because it necessitates an undramatic retrospect in the Alaskan episode. In almost every case, a straightforward and direct story will be more dramatic, and the use of such a retrospect is either a confession of the lack of skill or a trick for manufacturing a certain kind of suspense. In this story it is obviously the latter, and it achieves its melodramatic purpose. But retrospect should almost invariably be avoided, for the stories that require such tricks are not usually suitable for screen production.

"SHE HIRED A HUSBAND."

(Produced by Universal; starring Priscilla Dean; written by Rex Taylor; directed by Jack Dillon.)

SYNOPSIS.

Daphne Trowbridge is a most perverse young person who worries her aunt and uncle from morning until night by constantly going contrary to their wishes. In time they are unable to bear it longer and decide to marry her off to—Tom Dunstan, a young man who lives on the estate next door. They sing his praises to Daphne, and she, perverse as usual, turns him down when he proposes. Tom departs quite broken up about it. The next suitor the Trowbridges select for their niece they speak of in no kind terms, and their plan works for a while, for Daphne accepts his proposal. However, she discovers the trick just before the wedding and refuses to partake. Determined that they shall see her secure a husband for herself, she goes out in search of one and picks a heavily-bearded stranger she meets at the station. They are married with the understanding that it is to be a "name only" contract.

At home the "stranger" removes his beard and proves to be Tom, and he, wise fellow, decides to cure Daphne. She does not recognize him as the man she married, so Tom paints her husband in an array of horrible colors. Tom then disappears to the north woods again to look into his lumber interests, and later returns as the "stranger." This time he kidnaps Daphne and takes her off to the wooded wilds where he proceeds to practice the tactics of the caveman upon her. Eventually she becomes a dutiful wife. She is again kidnapped by Tom's enemies, and after a fierce fight he rescues her. An old scar on his shoulder reveals his identity to Daphne, and she is more than happy to discover that her husband and the man she really loved all the while are one and the same.

This comedy drama is useful as an example of the conventional use of Situations X and XXVIII, ("Abduction") and ("Obstacles to Love"). It also involves a very timeworn phase of Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), in the use of disguise. Disguise is seldom plausible in comedy, and its use in comedy drama or straight drama should be carefully avoided. In the final incident of the story—the revelation of Tom's identity to Daphne by means of a scar on his shoulder—we find a close approach to the familiar use of a birthmark as a means of identification. Birthmarks have been used so often in this manner that it is doubtful if any story involving them will ever again achieve production. In the same category is the identification of a character by means of a locket or other article of jewelry. Both of these plot devices have been exhausted.

The plot of this comedy drama is rather implausible in its very foundation, but it provides clean, wholesome amusement. It is here used as an example because of the trick of identification, which appears frequently in the work of amateurs.

"THE SILENT RIDER."

(Produced by Triangle; starring Roy Stewart; story by C. M. Clark; directed by Cliff Smith.)

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SYNOPSIS.

Driven desperate by cattle rustlers, Jim Carson, owner of the Ten Mile Ranch, appeals to the Texas Rangers for aid. A reply to him states that a man will arrive in a week to clean out the rustlers.

Shortly afterwards Carson employs Bob Gordon as a puncher. A strong dislike springs up between Gordon and Dave Merrill, Jim Carson's foreman. Jim's daughter, Jean, and Bob are mutually pleased with each other.

A week later Gordon discovers Merrill branding a calf and exchanges shots with him, although he does not get an opportunity to see Merrill's face. He finds the latter's hat with the initials "D. M." in it. Gordon returns Merrill's hat to him in the presence of Jean and Carson. Merrill pretends that the hat was stolen from him as a trick by some of the punchers. Shortly afterwards, Merrill, in conjunction with some of the other cowboys on the ranch, attempts to frame up Bob on a charge of cattle rustling. The tables are turned on him and a gun battle results. Merrill seizes Jean and dashes away with her and his outlaw pals to a lonely cabin. There Jean is forced to fight for her honor with Merrill until rescued by Gordon and his pals.

This story is a typical Western melodrama, of the kind that has been produced in large numbers. It depends, fundamentally, upon Situation IX, ("Daring Enterprise"), and X, ("Abduction"). XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), also appears, as in most stories with surprise endings. Both in plot material and treatment the story bears a close resemblance to many others of the same type. Its value lies in the swift, thrilling action, which makes a direct and dramatic appeal to most spectators.

The use of abduction in this case is so very trite that it affords a good example of how that situation should not be used. At one time no Western melodrama was complete without at least one abduction, but the art of photoplay writing has advanced since then and even two-reel Western thrillers must be more novel and distinctive than this story. The West, like Alaska and the Canadian Northwest, has been very thoroughly exploited as a motion picture background, and unless one can bring new experience and new ideas to this type of play it should not be undertaken.

"SINNERS."

(Realart production; story by Owen Davis; directed by Kenneth Webb; continuity by Eve Unsell; starring Alice Brady.)

SYNOPSIS.

Mary Horton, born and raised on Nantucket, goes to New York to earn her living. In the city she meets a woman from her own village who is known to have "gone wrong." She offers Mary help and as the girl is actually in need she accepts her assistance and takes up her abode in the woman's house while doing some sewing. She meets Hilda's friends and envies them their carefree existence. Bob Merrick becomes interested in Mary and understands that she is different. Mary, however, has about decided that she, too, wants the lively things of life when Horace Worth, her one-time sweetheart, arrives to tell her her mother is dying. Seeing the way Mary has been living he condemns her as one of Hilda's sort. Back home with mother, Mary again takes up the simple life, but one Sunday Hilda motors down with a party. Under the sweet influence of Mary's mother the city "rotters" are compelled to spend an odd day in singing hymns and drinking well water. Horace appears upon the scene to condemn Mary and her friends, but Bob Merrick admits he desires Mary for his wife. Hilda also decides to remain in the village and do hospital work. The rest of the party goes back to town somewhat chastened.

This story, in some respects similar to "The Miracle Man," is a study in contrasts. The contrast between the two groups of characters is less sharp and clear than in the Tucker production, and is therefore somewhat less poignant and dramatic. This is due to the fact that there are two intermediate characters, who link the group

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of the city with the simple lady of the country. A greater conflict would have resulted from the other construction; but the present play has the advantage of portraying a wholly sympathetic character placed in a suspensive predicament between two factions. Again, the story develops from character and the genuine drama springs directly from the conflict of character.

The interesting sub-division of Situation X, ("Rescue of a Soul in Captivity to Error"), again appears, and with it are combined Situations VII, XXXIII, and XXXIV. Stories based upon vital and significant themes, dealing with human conflicts and with characters who are real and understandable, are usually simple in plot structure. In this play, for example, and in "The Miracle Man", the greatest degree of suspense is attained by the characterization. The dramatic value—the conflict, suspense and punch—of the play results directly from character, rather than from plot manipulation. In addition, of course, sound craftsmanship must be applied to the construction of the story, but so far as the finished photoplay is concerned the action all appears to spring quite naturally from the reactions of the characters. This is the ideal to be striven for, and the writer who concentrates as much upon theme and character as upon plot will come close to it.

"THE SIX BEST CELLARS."

(Paramount-Artcraft production; starring Bryant Washburn; story by Holworthy Hall and Hugh Kahler; directed by Donald Crisp; continuity by Elmer Harris.)

SYNOPSIS.

Henry Carpenter and his wife, Millicent, belong to an exclusive suburban set. Henry is supposed to have a cellar full of drinkables against the drought of prohibition, but is in reality down to his last few bottles. Henry and Millicent give a dinner and Henry is overjoyed to find in the cellar of his liquor-hating aunt several cases of rare wines left by a brother, since deceased. At the last minute, however, Henry discovers that the bottles are empty. Fearful of facing his guests he produces some "home-brew" and then launches into a terrific speech against "drinking for drinking's sake." His fervor impresses his friends and the Prohibition element in the town offers to elect him to Congress. Then Henry finds a real case of rare wine in his aunt's cellar. The question is, to be a Congressman or not to be! On the one hand he may have social triumphs, and on the other, possibly a great political career. Henry's efforts to decide result in a merry set of complications—and the end of the picture is left for the audience to decide.

Since the enactment of the prohibition legislation there have been many stories submitted to the studios dealing in a comedic way with the aftermath of John Barleycorn's demise. Innumerable short comedies have been produced and several five-reel comedy dramas. The subject no longer possesses the timeliness of appeal it did and is not likely to remain popular very long. This story is interesting as a very clever satire upon the problems of the drought and of methods used to circumvent it.

The story opens with a comedic use of Situation VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty and Misfortune"), and then involves XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment"), XXX, ("Ambition"), and XXII, ("All Sacrificed for a Passion"), as well as XII ("Obtaining").

The use of recoil in the sudden plot twist that presents the clear predicament to Henry is especially clever—to be a Congressman or not to be! The same use of recoil is found in most effective short comedies and it is always effective when founded upon a natural and humorous conflict.

The satirical note in the idea that the social status of the hero is determined by his possession of liquor is maintained throughout the play, and it gives the plot a unity of dramatic purpose that it would otherwise have lost.

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Although the subject would seem to be exhausted by too frequent use "The Six Best Cellars" (which is an excellent comedy title, by the way) serves as a very good example of the comedic treatment of a timely subject.

"SMOULDERING EMBERS."

(Keenan-Pathe production; starring Frank Keenan; written by Kate Corbaley; continuity by Dorothy Yost; directed by Frank Keenan.)

SYNOPSIS.

Old John Conroy, a vagabond since his wife left him for dead and ran away with his baby son and another man, has two aims in life—to find his son, and to buy an apple orchard. He enters the town of Portersburg as a tramp and there he finds his son about to be forced into marriage with a girl he does not love in order to further his step-father's ambitions. The boy has been spoiled by too much money and too little thought, and old John resolves to make a man of him for the girl who loves him. He wins the boy's love and starts the work of regeneration, at the same time gaining control of the step-father's factory and acquiring knowledge of his political trickery. In this way he triumphs over the boy's step-father, wins a son, unites the lovers, and provides for their happy future.

This story is a simple, human character study, well suited to the personality of the star and with a sufficiently dramatic plot to hold the interest as the character unfolds. As an example of advanced characterization, in which Mrs. Corbaley is especially skillful, it is of unusual value, for it shows how subtle and quiet emotional conflicts can be dramatized for the screen.

Many writers, in developing the same plot, would have introduced a prologue showing the elopement of the wife with the other man, but in this unified story all that the audience needs to know of the preceding action is conveyed directly in one or two subtitles.

The situations that occur in the play are II, ("Deliverance"), XXXV, ("Recovery of a Lost One"), XXIV, ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior"), and a slight form of XXVII, ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One").

In this example it is not the dramatic strength of the plot or the novelty of the development that gives the play its charm and value. Rather, it is the human power and poignance of the characterization. Every detail of action in the play springs as a natural result of the character of John Conroy entering Portersburg and finding his son. Given the characters and the fundamental conditions, the plot is the natural result. Consequently it is lifelike, convincing and real, and it has a deep significance for the average spectator because it presents a noble old man—out of Life's scrap bag—moved by a deep affection for his only son.

Despite the simplicity and restraint of the play, it will be seen that it is truly dramatic. A definite dramatic objective is gained by John Conroy, and when the story ends, his life, his son's life, and the life of the man who won his wife are definitely and dramatically changed. And there can be nothing more dramatic than the presentation of characters in the process of growth.

"THE SQUAW MAN."

(Produced by Artcraft; all-star cast; from the play by Edwin Milton Royle; continuity by Beulah Marie Dix; directed by Cecil B. DeMille.)

SYNOPSIS.

Jim Wynnagate loves Diana Kerhill, wife of his cousin, Henry, Earl of Kerhill. Henry embezzles money entrusted to his care by the orphanage and in order to protect Diana's name, Jim shoulders the blame and disappears. He locates in a Wyoming cow-town, where he engages in ranching. Jim saves Naturich, an Indian girl, from Cash Hawkins and so incurs his enmity. Hawkins later attacks Jim just as Diana, Henry and a party arrive in the town while touring the States. Sir John Applegate,

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a member of the party, denounces Jim, but Diana finds time to say to him that she believes him innocent. Hawkins makes another attempt on Jim's life, but Naturich kills him. The sheriff would arrest Jim for the crime, but Big Bill proves that he could not have been guilty, by circumstantial evidence.

While hunting stray cattle Jim is thrown from his horse and is found by Naturich. She nurses him back to health and the intimacy that this situation brings finally results in a marriage. Thus does Jim become a squaw man. In time, little Hal is born to Naturich, and he proves to be the idol of Jim's ranch. But things do not go well with the squaw man. His cattle stray and are stolen and the sheriff is ever attempting to prove that he murdered Hawkins.

Then Henry is mortally wounded while hunting big game and before he dies he tells the truth about the embezzled money. Diana and Sir John visit Jim again and tell him that he must return to England to look after his estates. Henry insists that little Hal go, too, and Naturich, seeing the man she loves and her boy slip from her grasp, takes her life. Jim is deeply grieved at this, but leaves the West and after a few years marries Diana.

This story opens with a very effective use of Situation XXI, ("Self-sacrifice for Kindred"), with which is combined XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"). The XXVIIIth situation is again repeated in the major theme of the story, in the marriage between Jim and Naturich. Situation XXXIV, ("Remorse") is also used in the dying confession of the villain. This dying confession and the contrast between the wicked and noble cousins are both very timeworn, and if this had been a recent play rather than an adaptation from a success of a decade ago, would constitute a serious objection to it. In Naturich's sacrifice of her little son we have a very fine and poignant use of Situation XXIII, ("Necessity of Sacrificing Loved Ones").

The story is of value as an example because it deals with one phase of Indian life. Many writers attempt to write Indian stories, and some very good ones are occasionally submitted. But from the selling standpoint it is a bad subject to select, for it has been pretty thoroughly exhausted in the past. In the early days of the industry the one chief subject of photoplays was that of Indian life. As a result there is no longer any demand for stories of this type, and the writer should avoid the theme if he wishes to sell his work.

"SCRAP IRON."

(Charles Ray production; starring Charles Ray; story by Chas. E. Van Loan; directed by Charles Ray.)

SYNOPSIS.

This is the story of John Steel whose mother is everything in his life. She has brought him up to respect the law—to show kindness to everyone. She does not want him to cultivate his primitive instincts. There comes a time, however, when the little family is in dire straits and John enters the prize ring and fights, in order to keep the wolf from the door. His sweetheart has not responded to his advances, and he gets even after his big success by failing to acknowledge her when she attempts to renew the romance.

Upon this tenuous plot thread, an interesting picture has been built by means of attractive characterization, and a novel, entertaining handling of the element of conflict. The prize-fighting scenes, excellently acted and screened, appeal *per se* to the average masculine spectator; to the average feminine spectator largely because of the whimsical mannerisms and the lovable disposition of the hero, who battles so valiantly for the happiness of his proud little mother. The production illustrates the novel method of concentrating all the drama of the story into one central sequence.

The element of physical conflict upon which so much of the action is based, is accompanied by the mental conflict that takes place in the mind of the boy: whether

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he shall or shall not remain loyal to the training of his mother, when the odds are so great. Both are significant. There is a logical relationship between them: the physical conflict coming as a result of the mental.

The plot construction is too slight to deserve much notice—the only two situations that influence the action to any extent being VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune") and IX ("Daring Enterprise").

It is not wise for the untrained student to trust to such a limited fund of material, in writing his story. A master of short story writing like Charles E. Van Loan is able to counterbalance an inadequacy of dramatic situations and crises by the delicate mechanism of his characterization with its rich vein of pathos and its telling little touches of sentiment. Strip the plot of these, and it would seem meager, indeed. The characters give the illusion of reality. For this reason, and also because the picture presents a timely appeal in the prizefighting *motif*, it has met with success.

"OUT OF THE FOG."

(Nazimova production; starring Nazimova; from the drama, "'Ception Shoals" by H. Austin Adams; adapted by June Mathis and Albert Capellani; directed by Albert Capellani.)

SYNOPSIS.

In a small New England fishing town lives Job Coffin, a man of few words and narrow religious tendencies. His only relative is his young sister, Faith, a beautiful girl, beloved by all, but especially by a fisherman, Luke Allen. All the village knows of the romance, except Job Coffin.

One evening during a raging storm, the simple love story comes to a dramatic termination. The anxious watchers on the beach see the little fishing boats come safely into port, one by one, but Luke's is not among them, and later his lifeless body is found upon the coast.

That night, alone with her brother, Faith confesses that Luke was her lover—that they were to have been married in the spring, and that she would soon be a mother. The fury of the stern man is terrible and his vengeance paralyzing.

He takes the broken-hearted girl to a lonely lighthouse in the Carribbean Sea—"Ception Shoals. Here little Eve is born. Job denounces the child and vows she shall pay the penalty of solitude. Constant brooding over the fate of her little one drives the young mother to suicide and the baby is left alone with the embittered man. She grows into beautiful girlhood, never seeing any human being except Job.

Toward dusk one evening a heavy fog rolls in from the sea—blotting out all objects and dimming the beams from the light in the tower.

Eve, dressed in her habitual costume—a ragged shirt and a still more ragged pair of trousers, makes her way to the beach. Through the drifting fog, she sees a vessel stranded on the treacherous shoals of 'Ception light. It is the yacht, "Driftwood." A small boat puts out for the shore and soon a young man is standing on the beach beside her. The sight of the weird little figure brings a smile to the young man's lips, but to her he is a revelation—a heroic figure from out of the fog.

The young man, whose name is Philip Blake, explains to Eve's uncle that the widow of his first mate is aboard the yacht and is expecting the birth of a child. He asks permission to bring her to the lighthouse but is sternly refused.

Braving the wrath of her uncle, Eve brings the party ashore. The baby is born, and a strong tie of friendship develops between the young mother and the girl—the latter for the first time in her life realizing that she also is a woman. She remembers that there are some old clothes belonging to her mother, in the attic. These she puts on and the transformation is such that Philip is struck with amazement at her beauty.

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They fall in love but Job Coffin vows to keep them apart. When the "Driftwood" sails, Philip promises Eve that he will return soon and marry her. As the days go by and he does not come, Job tells her that he is dead.

Months later, when Job sees the "Driftwood" drop anchor off the island, he hastens to hide Eve. Then he tells Philip that she is dead. Broken-hearted, Philip is about to sail away when he sees two figures struggling in the light tower. Hurriedly going ashore, he finds Eve in the embrace of Jim Smoot, the bullying mate of the yacht. Knocking the man down, he rescues Eve and goes to demand an explanation from Job Coffin. The excitement has been too much for the old man and they find him dead at the foot of the stairs.

With nothing further to hinder them, Philip and Eve leave the island, which has been so long a prison for the girl, and soon after a quiet wedding takes place in the little church in the village.

This story is built upon a compelling theme—the conflict between convention and a higher code of humanity. The situations are gripping, because they are thoroughly human. In the untimely death of Luke, a good use is made of XXXVI ("Loss of Loved Ones"), which is more poignant since it is almost immediately followed by XXVII ("Discovery of the Dishonor of a Loved One"). The star is given a splendid chance for deep, emotional action in this culmination of tragedy and grief. Faith's morality founded upon love and trust, is brought into direct opposition with the narrow fanaticism of her brother, whose religion embraces neither understanding nor charity. Here situation XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior") is brought into play. Job's relationship with Eve comprises a variegated development of situation VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"). VIII ("Revolt"), combined with IX ("Daring Enterprise") motivate Eve's bravery in bringing to land the crew of the "Driftwood." XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love"), used in a rather conventional way, keeps up the suspense until the climax of the plot—Philip's rescue of Eve.

On account of censorship regulations, which have come into effect since this story was filmed, it is unwise for the student to attempt to deal with such subject matter as illicit love and illegitimacy. Even though material of this sort is treated from an idealistic standpoint, as in "Out of the Fog," producers have become wary of handling it. Especially is this true when the story in question has not stood the test of publication or of stage production.

"Out of the Fog" offers excellent opportunity for wonderful photographic effects. The setting—the ruggedness, the inaccessibility of the coast, and the endless changeability of the sea—is a fitting background for this drama of moods and emotions and strong, sacrificial love. In Faith is typified the calm of the fathomless ocean in its restful hours; in Job, the unreasoning, blind rage of the tempest that hurls to destruction everything in its path.

The student may gain much valuable knowledge from a study of the theme, the "atmosphere," and the situations of this photoplay. Though certain phases of the plot are open to criticism, as a whole, it is well constructed and effectively worked out.

"THE MATCH BREAKER."

(Metro production; starring Viola Dana; story by Meta White; continuity by Arthur J. Zellner; directed by Dallas M. Fitzgerald.)

SYNOPSIS.

This story concerns Jane Morgan, a chic, winsome young girl, who leaves home rather than marry a man considerably her senior, and looks about for a career for herself. She has been, in the past, the unwilling cause of several broken engagements, so she picks her vocation—she will be a match breaker. She agrees to save old and young from gold-digging adventuresses. An advertisement in the papers brings results. A young man employs her to vamp his father and thus save him from a pursuing

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widow. But the father also sees the advertisement, and hearing that his son is paying attention to a girl in the city, seeks the aid of Jane. So she has the job of saving her sweetheart from herself.

The action mounts to a climax in which Jane saves the father from a badger game. The business methods of the heroine, which appear a bit shady during the course of the picture, are eventually cleared up, so that she is safe from the charge of taking money under false pretenses. The ending is happy.

There is a novel comedic idea here that has been developed in a sprightly, amusing manner, giving full play to the vivacity and charm of the star. The situations are humorous, especially the one in which Jane finds herself obliged to alienate the man she loves, "for business reasons." This is very cleverly worked out. The complications are multiplied until the heroine is hopelessly entangled, and the audience is fascinated, wondering how she will be able to work her way out of her difficulties.

The story is a good example of "farce" construction, which demands plot intricacies, whether they are always thoroughly plausible or not. The first situation of prominence is IX ("Daring Enterprise"). A novel use is made of XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love"). As is usual in comedy drama, XXXII ("Mistaken Jealousy") gives rise to a good deal of the action, and XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment") is utilized to some extent to motivate the suspicion directed against Jane.

It is difficult in comedy drama to avoid trite situations, but this plot seems to be fairly free from them. The best way for the student to keep his material from falling into conventional ruts, is to be sure that his premise contains a "new twist." The idea of the girl setting out with the purpose of becoming a professional "match breaker" is one that allows for a *different* development of the "innocent vamp" motif. It is one, also, that contains innate possibilities for comedy drama situations. The entanglements that ensue, are brought about so clearly that the audience never for a moment "gets lost" but is enabled fully to appreciate the climax, when it finally materializes.

There is an excellent market for scintillating, five reel comedy drama. But producers are only interested in those stories which possess novel elements. If the student is able to think out an interesting premise, he should be successful, by applying carefully the dramatic laws of construction, in building up an attractive photoplay of this popular type.

"THE TEETH OF THE TIGER."

(Paramount-Artcraft production; story by Maurice LeBlanc; continuity by Roy Somerville; directed by Chet Withey.)

SYNOPSIS.

To the world Arsene Lupin, the notorious French crook, is dead. In reality as Paul Sernine he is living in the suburbs of an American city. Henry Forbes, an invalid, in charge of a Doctor Varney, and a friend of Paul's, is found murdered. Marie Forbes, wife of the dead man, is accused of his murder, as is Gordon Savage, who is a close but innocent friend of Marie's. A French detective named Jabot arrives and recognizes Paul as Lupin. With difficulty Paul escapes the clutches of Jabot and the detectives. Gordon escapes and swears his innocence to Paul, who believes him and offers to help him. A trap is arranged at the lawyer's office to arrest the one who comes to claim a share of the Forbes will. Lupin arrives and is arrested. The real criminal, Doctor Varney, suspecting a trap, has sent Florence Chandler, his ward, to prove that she is Forbes' dead sister's child. She also is arrested but Lupin aids her in escaping. After many exciting incidents Lupin corners Doctor Varney and makes him confess to the murder of Forbes, after Varney has attempted to blow

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up the Forbes house and everybody in it with an infernal machine. Marie is released and Doctor Varney's ward and Lupin find that their mutual worries and exciting experiences have made them love each other.

It would be difficult to find a better example of a well-sustained mystery story than this play adapted from the well-known French detective stories. Mystery plays, like serials, require very skillful and adroit construction, for if a certain clue is too heavily stressed the mystery will be lost. On the other hand, if a slight suggestion of the ultimate explanation of the story is not "planted" rather early in the action the audience will feel that it has been tricked and will be disappointed at the ending. The construction of such plays is always artificial, for the mystery invariably depends upon the ability to withhold a certain bit of evidence from the audience and then to reveal it in a plausible way at just the right time. It is indeed a difficult thing to make the audience believe in the reality of an artificial play, and many times photoplaywrights have failed to accomplish this purpose. The screen does not afford the same opportunity to the writer of covering up holes and weaknesses in a plot that the short story or novel form does, and many adaptations of mystery tales from these other mediums have been far from mysterious.

The basic situations of the play are "Erroneous Judgment" (XXXIII), which is cleverly thrust upon the audience as well as upon the characters; "Pursuit" (V); and "Enigma" (XI); all of which have been used frequently in much the same way in mystery melodramas. In this example again it is not the novelty of the plot so much as the skill of construction that makes the story effective, plausible, and entertaining.

Because of the very great technical difficulties of this kind of play, it is usually unwise for the beginning photoplaywright to undertake such stories. It is far better to acquire technical skill in the simpler forms of drama and then to advance to plays of this more complicated kind. But it is well to make a careful study of mystery stories because the very fact of their frequent failure will illustrate many principles of technique.

"OVERLAND RED."

(Universal production; starring Harry Carey; adapted from the novel of Henry Herbert Knibbs by Lynn F. Reynolds; directed by Lynn F. Reynolds.)

SYNOPSIS.

"Overland Red" is a hobo prospector, wandering along the edge of the Mojave desert. He steals a chicken, and while cooking it strikes up a friendship with a youth named "Collie." They become pals and journey along together. While on the railroad right-of-way they chance upon an old prospector, dying of starvation. After his death, they hide some gold dust and the map of a mining claim found on his person.

The sheriff of that vicinity, Silent Saunders, has conspired with some men to rob the old prospector and jump his claim. They discover "Red" and Collie with the dead body and put them in jail. The two manage an adroit escape and flee from the desert town. On a nearby ranch, while hiding from the sheriff, they meet a girl, Louise Alacarme. She is friendly and both fall in love with her. She assists them to escape the sheriff when he appears.

Later "Red" discovers the mine and works it with a young Easterner named Billy Winthrop. The fortunes of all are made, and when it is discovered that Louise is the daughter of the dead prospector, she makes the boys her partners. Collie weds the girl and "Red" becomes president of the mine.

It is difficult to endow a story of the west with novelty, because such a story is very apt to deal with subject matter that has been used on the screen to repletion. Audiences have lost interest in the old type of "western" with its incessant gun-play, its wild pursuits, and its violence. "The west" as a screen locale has, however, by no means lost its charm, and when a new treatment is given a story woven in this colorful, romantic setting, there is ample opportunity for it to succeed.

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"Overland Red" is just such a photoplay. It is true that it has a number of riding and shooting scenes of the usual melodramatic sort, but it is redeemed, as a whole, from becoming merely conventional melodrama, because of the original characterization, and the fresh, humorous bits that occur throughout the entire course of the action. The old westerns were, for the most part, sadly devoid of real humor. But here there are laughs as well as "thrills."

The comedy element depends principally upon characterization—especially that of the leading role, "Red." His joviality and mirth-provoking antics furnish the light touches that throw the dramatic episodes into strong contrast. "Collie" is a good foil for "Red"—the interplay of these two personalities being delightful.

Considered from the viewpoint of photoplay technique, this structure is too episodic. Several of the plot steps depend upon coincidence. The story could have been moulded into more compact form and the motivation strengthened. The ending is too stereotyped to be quite satisfying, the chance discovery of the mine being a time-worn "twist." In comparison with other westerns, however, the story is commendable. Its splendid characterization and novel development lift it from the realm of the commonplace.

The situations used here are those that frequently occur in the adventure story: V ("Pursuit"); VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"); and IX ("Daring Enterprise").

"Overland Red" may be considered one of the best pictures of its type ever produced. The market for westerns is limited, owing to the fact that most stories so classified deal with melodramatic material in a thoroughly hackneyed way. If the student desires to write of life in the west, it would be well for him to strive to make his story as distinctive and entertaining as this Harry Carey vehicle.

"THE THIRTEENTH CHAIR."

(Produced by Pathe; starring Yvonne Delva; from the play by Bayard Veiller; continuity by Leonce Perret; directed by Leonce Perret.)

SYNOPSIS.

This is a story of the murder of two men, one, Stephen Lee, the other, Edward Wales. The former, having been declared bankrupt, conceives the scheme of black-mailing Helen Trent in order to reimburse himself. However, her brother, Willy Crosby, and her friend, Helen O'Neil, decide to interview him. While Willy remains outside Helen is engaged in a fierce struggle to regain the incriminating letters. Worried over her absence, the young man enters to find the girl staring at the dead body of Lee, who has a knife thrust in his back.

The scene shifts to the Crosby home, where Edward Wales has engaged a clairvoyant to solve the mystery of the following day, Friday, the 13th. The lights are switched off and the guests are assembled in a seance, when Wales, who has been sitting in the thirteenth chair, is murdered in identically the same manner as Lee. Inspector Donahue takes charge, but an examination of the guests fails to reveal the weapon. By pre-arrangement with the clairvoyant, she is accused of the murder. This has the result of causing Helen O'Neil, suspected of the crime, to rush to her mother's protection, thus disclosing the relationship between them.

Another seance is held and the clairvoyant, through trickery, points to the real murderer. And he confesses. He killed Lee for breaking up his home and stealing his fortune, and Wales to prevent him from discovering the truth.

This story is an excellent example of the use of Situation XI, ("Enigma"), in the photoplay. While the two murders are rather gruesome they are properly subordinated to the sense of mystery that envelops the action. In this case the spectator is not given sufficient time to think of the murders as such, but his attention is concentrated upon the solution of the mystery. It should be observed that the author does not keep a secret from the audience. Rather he presents all of the evidence in an

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objective manner and then takes the spectator into his confidence in working out the problem. A mystery story so constructed is much more interesting and appealing than any artificial trick ending could possibly be, for the spectator's interest is carried swiftly from the inceptive situation to the very climax. Situation XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"), is used in the circumstantial evidence connected with the two murders, but it is used in an entirely different way from any we have heretofore observed. In this case the situation is not merely confined to the actors in the play, but it produces a realistic and convincing effect upon the spectator. The author has used the method of construction employed in a great deal of detective fiction, in which the reader is definitely allied with the detective in ferreting the crime. In "Sherlock Holmes," for example, the reader is always another Watson, following carefully every deduction of the master sleuth. Situation III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"), and especially the subdivision C, ("Professional Pursuit of Criminals"), forms the basis of the plot.

This type of play is very difficult to write, and the amateur should not attempt it. Even in this case, written by a master dramatist, the ending is not wholly satisfactory in its relation to the mystery of the plot. The use of the enforced confession, induced by a mediumistic seance, although logical and plausible, is not especially novel. In the last analysis, it is dependent upon the chance characterization of the confessor, as in most cases. If the real murderer had been as strong a character as his two crimes would imply, it is unlikely that he would be so easily made to confess. In general, both the enforced confession and the use of a mediumistic seance are ineffective plot elements and should be avoided. This story was originally written as a stage play, where the illusion of reality was much more easily created, but on the screen it failed to produce the same mysterious and enigmatic effect.

"TOBY'S BOW."

(Goldwyn production; starring Tom Moore; adapted from the stage play by John Taintor Foote; directed by Harry Beaumont.)

SYNOPSIS.

Tom Blake, whose first novel has proved a big success, is reproached by his friendly publisher for wasting his time in dissipation around New York. He goes to South Carolina to recuperate and boards at the home of Eugenia Fairchild, who lives on an impoverished estate with her old grandmother and an ancient colored butler named Toby. Not wishing to pose as a celebrity, Blake goes under the name of Jim Porter. To avoid offending the old grandmother's pride he agrees with the girl to behave as an invited guest. Bagby, a wealthy neighbor, is a suitor for Eugenia's hand, but she refuses him. Blake learns to love the girl. He finds that she has hopes of a literary career and that her hopes are much greater than her ability. But with the assistance of an old friend of the family, the "Judge," he persuades Eugenia to collaborate with him in writing a novel, from the sale of which she can secure funds to pay off a six thousand dollar note given to cover indebtedness on the property. Blake really writes the book, although Eugenia believes half the work is hers. His publisher, Paige, accepts the book. Later he discovers that Blake is the real author and comes to the Fairchild home. Blake is compelled to acknowledge his identity. Eugenia finally forgives the deception and consents to marry him, and Toby bestows upon Blake the bow he reserves for members of the family.

In this case the adaptation from the stage play falls far short of being dramatic; the story is a simple, human, pleasing comedy drama of the mild kind, with scarcely a situation or a complication to ripple its surface. Its chief value lies in characterization, and on the stage the gentle, humorous dialogue and the pleasing characterization probably helped the story to success. On the screen the lack of a strong plot is woefully apparent. The situation of "Erroneous Judgment" appears in a very mild form and on this slight basis the plot structure is erected. But the action is altogether too mild, too smooth and unruffled to be effective on the screen. The charm of the

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picture in this case depends, not upon the story, but upon the charm of the star and the skillful direction, which made even slight and commonplace incidents human and interesting.

The brilliant young author who helps his sweetheart to pay off a mortgage by collaborating with her is a rather timeworn and frail idea on which to base a five-reel photoplay. Essentially the same plot has been used in much the same way in the past. The story, therefore, furnishes the student with an example of a light kind of comedy drama that is all too prevalent among beginners. The characterization of the story is so good and the comedic incidents so plentiful that it is a pity the author could not have dramatized his material and developed it in a really interesting way. When a photoplaywright has characterization and a basic plot idea of this kind, he should make every effort to find the situations that will lead to a really dramatic climax.

"TOTON."

(Produced by Triangle; starring Olive Thomas; written by Catherine Carr; directed by Frank Borzage.)

SYNOPSIS.

David Lane, an American, meets Yvonne, a beautiful French girl, in the Latin quarter of Paris. He sees in her the Madonna-like beauty that inspires him to implore that she pose for him, and in the days that follow they fall in love and have a happy honeymoon after their hasty marriage.

When Lane is called to America by the death of his mother, his father takes advantage of the opportunity and has his lawyers secure an annulment of the marriage of his son in Paris.

Yvonne dies shortly after the birth of her child, "Toton," and the little girl baby is entrusted to the care of her friend Pierre, an Apache. In revenge for the sorrow which Pierre believes that the American has brought wittingly to Yvonne, the little motherless girl is brought up as a boy and trained to become the most skilled pickpocket of the Latin quarter.

In the meantime, Toton's father has grown to middle age. He has never married again, but has adopted a boy as his son. This boy, Carew, goes to Paris with his father, to pursue their artistic careers, and Toton becomes Carew's guide and studio boy.

When an attempt to rob their studio of valuable paintings is made by Pierre, he recognizes Lane as the American he believes is responsible for the sorrowful death of Yvonne. In revenge he reveals to Lane the identity of Toton, educated as a thief, and taught to hate all things American.

But the European war and the subsequent shelling of Paris brings about situations that convince Pierre of Lane's complete innocence in the injury brought about by his apparent neglect of Yvonne.

Pierre is injured, but lives to reveal to Toton the identity of her father and to see them happily united. Later, when America enters the war, Toton becomes the happy wife of Carew.

This story opens with a very effective use of Situation XXVIII, ("Obstacles to Love"), in the annulment of the hero's marriage by his father. The death of the heroine and her appeal to the Apache lover to care for her child involve Situations XXXVI, ("Loss of Loved Ones"), and I, ("Supplication"). These in turn are followed by IV, ("Vengeance Taken for Kindred Upon Kindred"), combined with XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment").

It will be seen that in this case, again, the story is definitely divided into two unified sections, one constituting a prologue and the other developing the real story. This is the only justifiable violation of the principle of unity, and it is the only

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dramatic way of telling a story involving a long period of time. Unity of action and unity of theme are preserved throughout the story, even in the face of its scattered action and time lapses.

It is well to observe, further, that every character, including the Apache "villain," is sympathetic. It therefore produces a greater illusion of reality than a story lacking in subtle characterization. One scene in this picture will never be forgotten by those who viewed it: the scene in which the thieving, wicked Apache lovingly held the baby girl in his arms and wept over her. There is, in such a character, a reasonable and human motive for vengeance, and the theme therefore loses the artificiality and melodrama with which it is too often associated.

Special attention should be given to the idea of the girl brought up as a boy. Although we have already referred to this element as rather timeworn, in this case it is used effectively because it is very plausible that Pierre should so rear the child, and for the further reason that the audience is never led to believe that she is a boy. There is none of the implausible "disguise" element in the story, and in the actual production the loose, free costume of the Parisian Apache lent itself admirably to a successful use of the plot idea. Similarly, the confession of Pierre is well motivated. He has already learned that he was mistaken in his judgment of Lane, and it is perfectly natural for him, dying, to reunite the daughter and her father in order that she may live happily.

All of which goes to illustrate that treatment is of greater importance than plot material. The author of this story is a skilled dramatist, but the same material, treated less expertly, would have been very implausible and commonplace.

"TRAILED BY THREE."

(Arthur F. Beck Serial in Fifteen Episodes; story by Charles T. Dazey; directed by Perry Vekroff.)

SYNOPSIS OF FIRST TWO EPISODES.

Jane Creighton is the daughter of a missionary in the South Sea Islands. She offers to help Anoto, chief of a tribe whose people have been imprisoned by one Rankin, who has set himself up as a ruler and shown great cruelty to the natives. Anoto is in possession of priceless pearls and he goes to America with Jane to sell them and buy the freedom of his people. In America the two run into a series of startling adventures and find themselves pursued by Trent and his accomplices. Jane finds a friend in Tom Carewe, who does all in his power to help the girl. Tom goes to a Chinese joint to locate the jewels, which have been stolen. He is dropped into a pit but saved by Anoto. Jane has been taken to the joint by a chap who is posing as Tom's friend, but he reveals himself as a villain in league with Trent. Tom and Anoto hurry to the girl's rescue when they hear her cries, but Tom is about to be stabbed to death by an infuriated Chinaman when the second episode ends.

A serial production of fifteen episodes (thirty thousand feet of film) naturally involves a rather complicated story. One of the most difficult factors in the construction of such a photoplay is presented by the necessity of getting the story started in the first episode. It is necessary to "plant" the seeds of all the later complications in a swift and interesting episode. The simplest and perhaps the best method is to present a clear and definite conflict, motivated by some strong desire (such as the desire of Trent to secure the pearls in Anoto's possession), and then to carry this conflict into all of its possible ramifications.

The first two episodes of "Trailed by Three" afford a good example of the quick and thrilling inception of the plot. The conflict is presented, the factions outlined, and the central characters then plunged into a surprising and adventurous series of dangers and escapes. There is no special novelty in the plot material of the story, but from the constructive viewpoint it is brisk, interesting and effective.

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The situations that appear in the story are VI, ("Disaster"), II, ("Deliverance"), XII, ("Obtaining"), and X, ("Abduction"), all of which are calculated to be of melodramatic interest.

The technical skill required in the construction of a serial photoplay makes it unwise for the beginning writer to undertake this form. Although high prices are paid for serials, the five reel feature play offers much better opportunities to the beginner, both in mastering technique and in salability. The serials are here given as examples because many students are interested in this form.

"TWO WEEKS."

(First National production; starring Constance Talmadge; adapted from the play "At the Barn" by Anthony Wharton; directed by Sydney A. Franklin.)

SYNOPSIS.

Lillums Blair, Broadway chorus girl, tolerates the advances of wealthy Reginald Clonbarry because of his theatrical influence. He promises not to speak of love until she has achieved success, induces a promoter to star her and her debut is the season's hit. At a celebration party Clonbarry demands payment and Lillums runs away, boards a passing wagon and winds up at the country home of three bachelors, two elderly, one, Kenneth Maxwell, young but straight-laced. She obtains shelter, and when Clonbarry arrives in pursuit, Kenneth tells him she is an old friend who is going to spend two weeks with them. Clonbarry goes. Lillums accepts the invitation, much to Maxwell's horror. But she is not to be driven away, and finally her innocent gaiety wins the trio and Maxwell falls in love with her. Still he mistrusts Lillums, until she allows him to overhear Clonbarry proposing to her to accompany him. She then tells Maxwell some wholesome truths and all ends well.

In this story we find another clear example of the comedy drama based upon the conflict of contrasted characters. The idea of a girl of the theater being placed in conflict with the three bachelors, and especially with the straight-laced young bachelor, is an effective premise for the play. As soon as the well contrasted characters are introduced, there is a degree of suspense in the play, and it should be noted that it is suspense of character at the beginning rather than suspense of plot devices. There is no more authentic basis for suspense than this. In "The Miracle Man," as soon as the crook read the press item that told of the miracle-working Patriarch, without any further plot development, we were on the alert and held in tense expectancy to see just what would come of the conflict of these very different individuals. And in this romantic comedy drama much the same expectancy is created by the contrast in character. In real life it is the uncertain and often unexpected twist of character that awakens our interest, rather than an unusual situation. We often hear it said, for example, "I never thought she would do that!" or "How could he possibly have acted so?" We are surprised by the actions of certain characters, and there is suspense in our observation of them. If, in creating characters for a photoplay, one draws persons so human that they will do unexpected yet plausible things, one has gone far in the establishment of a dramatic premise.

This story opens with a comedic form of Situation VII, ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), with which is combined XXXIII, ("Erroneous Judgment"). Situations I and II, ("Supplication" and "Deliverance"), also enter into the play and "Erroneous Judgment" recurs in several forms. All of these situations are natural, plausible and interesting because they spring with seeming inevitability from the inter-relation and the reactions of the characters one to another.

The idea of a girl of the stage winning the love of a Puritanic and ultra-respectable man, who temporarily considers her like all other women of the theatre, has been used many times before, and it is made novel in this story only by the individuality of the characters and the cleverness of the incidents. The plot itself is very simple and uncomplicated and only by the skillful use of incident could it be developed to the five-reel length. It might have been possible to have developed a stronger

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and more amusing play from the same premise, and if the story had originally been written for the screen it would have contained situations of greater strength. But it serves to illustrate the use of character contrast in the lighter forms of the photoplay.

"THE VENTURES OF RUTH"

(Produced by Ruth Roland Serials, Inc.; serial production in fifteen episodes of two reels each; continuity by Gilson Willets; directed by Harry Haskin.)

SYNOPSIS.

Fulfilling the promise made her dead father, Ruth Robin sets out in determined fashion to accomplish the task set for her with each one of the thirteen keys, which come to her most mysteriously one at a time. Her father has informed her that her fortune is deeply involved with a peacock fan, which is claimed by a woman who presents herself as the Countess Zitka. Ruth's father was caught in the toils of a society of arch criminals known as the "13," and it is part of Ruth's mission to right some of the wrongs her father was forced to commit. As the "13" do not know she is their former member's daughter, her job is slightly easier, in so far as they have sworn to have revenge on the girl if ever she should get within their reach. In the first three episodes Ruth performs the duties imposed upon her by the notes, which are wrapped about the keys. She recovers the peacock fan, returns a valuable necklace to the home from which it was stolen, and frees a girl whom the "13" are holding for a large ransom from her father. In accomplishing her objects, Ruth encounters all the dangers and hazards which go with contact with people whose homes are filled with sliding panels and trap doors.

The plot of this serial is of the extremely fantastic and improbable kind, relying more upon swift and romantic action than upon logic for its effects. There is a mystery and fascination about the premise of the plot that will appeal to all lovers of thrilling adventure, and for the duration of the picture at least the effect of plausibility can be maintained. Once the premise of the plot is granted, the events that follow are fairly logical and do not depend in any great degree upon chance or coincidence. In serials to an even greater extent than in other forms of the photoplay, the author must work back to the starting point from his climaxes in order to establish premises that will logically lead to the thrilling situations. Amateurs who attempt the serial form often fail to establish sound premises and their efforts consequently fall short of conviction.

In this story the plot is founded upon a form of "Self-sacrifice." (Situations XXI and XXII), in that the heroine makes a promise to her dying father which involves her in many predicaments. The trick of the thirteen keys is an especially good device for serial purposes, for it provides a new starting point for almost every episode. "The Enigma," (XI), and "Crime Pursued by Vengeance," (III), and "Deliverance," (II), also appear in the plot in various episodes.

The appeal of serials, especially of this fantastic type, rests largely upon the author's ingenuity in devising a swift succession of predicaments. In a serial something must happen, and something exciting, in almost every foot of film. The writing of serials, therefore, requires an alert and quick imagination and the ability to keep one situation continually crowding out another for a place in the plot.

It will be observed that the serials we have considered follow more or less formulated plots, with little deviation from traditional material, for only a few of the situations of the thirty-six can be effectively employed in so swift a sequence. But the time is coming when producers will demand more plot logic and better characterization in this form of play.

"WHY CHANGE YOUR WIFE."

(Cecil B. DeMille special production; story by William C. DeMille; continuity by Sada Cowan and Olga Printzlau; featuring Thomas Meighan and Gloria Swanson; directed by Cecil B. DeMille.)

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SYNOPSIS.

After ten years of married life, Beth and Robert Gordon are fast drifting apart. Beth is too wifely and tries too hard to please her husband with the result that she becomes a bore instead of a helpmate. In a huff the husband keeps an appointment with a young woman client of his. He is caught by Beth and the two are divorced. Robert marries the client widow, but soon discovers that she is becoming worse than his first wife had ever been. Beth, heartbroken, decided to change her method of living and becomes extravagant. Beth and Gordon meet again and they realize their mistake. She nurses him through an attack of a sickness. A divorce is granted from wife number two, and Gordon and Beth begin life again.

The brief synopsis can not even suggest the subtleties of characterization, dramatic technique and direction in the completed photoplay. The plot is a very simple and uncomplicated one, but it was developed with a great deal of dramatic skill and human interest. The continuity of the play, as those readers who have seen it will remember, was unusually perfect in keeping the various factions of characters before the audience and in preparing the way for dramatic crises. The use of repetition was especially good in dramatic value. For example, the beginning of the breach between Beth and Robert occurred as the result of Beth's interruptions of Robert while he was shaving. The same scenes, virtually, were re-enacted with Sally and Robert. There were at least twenty such repetitions in the play, and each one added to the character development and to the cumulative dramatic effect. This device serves to unify an otherwise disjointed story, in the same way as a key title.

Although there were a number of coincidences and accidents in the play, the characterization was so thoroughly human that they did not strain the credulity.

The situations of real dramatic value in the story all sprang from character. Situations XXIV, ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior"), VIII, ("Revolt"), which involved all of the characters in a different way, and II, ("Deliverance"), were employed in the play, the first two with noteworthy effect.

The value of a play of this kind lies almost wholly in the lifelike presentation of character. It is essentially the old, old story of two women in love with one man, a story that is always new if the characters are new. It therefore possesses a universal appeal and a deep human interest, and it creates the illusion of reality in a marked degree. But the dramatic skill in the treatment of character development and in the use of incidents is of much greater value, in such a case, than the mere plot structure.

"WIVES AND OTHER WIVES."

(Produced by American; starring Mary Miles Minter; written by Stephen Fox; directed by Lloyd Ingraham.)

SYNOPSIS.

Mary Miles Minter plays the part of Robin Challoner, a bride of a few days. Her husband enters as she is burning some love letters and becomes very jealous. She leads him to believe that the letters are from a rival and he leaves her. In the apartment above lives a judge and his wife. They expect a certain Mr. and Mrs. Craig to call and sublease the apartment. Through error, Craig gets off the elevator at the wrong floor, and wanders into the Challoner apartment. He is mistaken by the young bride for a burglar. She shoots, he faints from fright. She thinks she has killed him. She runs out for a doctor. Her husband returns and discovers Craig, apparently intoxicated, in his wife's room. This further kindles the flame of jealousy, and Challoner decides upon a divorce. With a view to restoring the domestic equilibrium, the judge invites the young bride and her husband to his country home for a visit. Mrs. Craig is invited, as well as some mutual acquaintances, the Doubledays. Mr. Craig gets slightly intoxicated. When he learns that his wife has gone to the country, he follows. Because of his condition, the butler suggests

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that "he sleep it off" before being presented to the company. In his befuddled condition, Craig staggers into Mrs. Challoner's room and goes to bed. She enters and believes her husband has made up his mind to come back. She discovers that it is a stranger. She screams. At the same time Mr. Challoner, in the suite across the hall, is confronted by Mrs. Craig. Both appear very embarrassed. Between the two couples there now develops a series of situations as they try to find out just where they do belong. The Doubledays plan a fake "robbery" in order to collect insurance on their jewelry. Their maid overhears their plans. She immediately informs the chauffeur and the two decide to get the jewelry and skip. The Doubledays make known the "robbery."

While the guests are discussing the "robbery," Robin's letters are found. The judge believes the letters to be a clue to the "robbery." He informs the guests that he will place the letters in a table drawer and that by morning he expects to see the jewelry in place of the letters or he will inform the police. Robin, not wishing her letters to be exposed, endeavors to obtain them. Her husband, anxious to find out who wrote the letters, sets out upon the same mission. The Doubledays find that their jewelry has actually been stolen. Meanwhile, the maid and the chauffeur prepare to get away. Robin accidentally discovers them making their getaway. She turns the culprits and the jewelry over to the judge. The maid not only admits the robbery, but tells of the Doubledays' scheme. The judge requests the Doubledays to leave his home immediately. Challoner then finds out it was his own letters that caused all the trouble, and "after the heavy storm the sun shines again."

It would be difficult to find a more clever example of light, farcical comedy drama than "Wives and Other Wives," which is based upon variations of Situations XXXII and XXXIII, ("Mistaken Jealousy" and "Erroneous Judgment"). The infinite variations on old themes can not better be illustrated than by this example. The story deals with the very human and plausible idea of a jealous young husband and a clever wife, who hopes to arouse his interest and attention by maintaining the jealousy. This same idea, in the abstract, has been employed scores of times as the basis of one and two-reel comedies, but in this case it was lengthened to five reels, and the farcical spirit of the story was well preserved throughout.

The plot frequently depends upon chance occurrences, but the action is restricted to such close quarters—first, within the apartment building and then within the country house—that the overhearings and meetings are much more plausible than they otherwise could have been. It is well for the photoplaywright to observe the amount of material required for a farcical comedy drama of this type. The action of such productions must be swift and progressive, corresponding to the farce tempo of stage plays, and for that reason more plot material of an incidental kind is required than in straight drama or less farcical comedy drama.

"THE WOLF."

(Produced by Vitagraph; starring Earle Williams; from the play by Eugene Walter; continuity and direction by James Young.)

SYNOPSIS.

Jules Beaublien is a French-Canadian trapper, whose sole mission in the story is to mete out vengeance upon the man who wronged his sister. He has been absent two years and on his return with the girl's fiancée, Baptiste, he discovers that she is only a memory. Jules wins his friend's consent to be the man who will execute the vengeance, and if he fails, the mission will fall upon the latter. They venture to the home of Andrew MacTavish, a Scotch settler, whose daughter, Hilda, is Jules' beloved.

There it is that fate takes a kindly hand and introduces the American, MacDonald. He is the guilty one, but he is wily enough to hide his secret. However, in a moment of proud boastfulness, he admits to his companion, Huntley, that he is

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responsible for the tragedy. And the news reaches Jules. The trapper is not ready to strike. He must first provide for the safety of Hilda, who has fallen into the clutches of the American. Her father has never forgiven her for her resemblance to her pleasure-loving mother. So Jules must convince the father that she is a dutiful daughter.

The time arrives for the execution of vengeance. The crafty Frenchman lures the American to the edge of a river, and in a terrific duel, he accomplishes his mission. Thus the shadow gives away to sunshine, for Jules finds happiness with Hilda.

This photoplay is a good example of a very strong and successful stage play that failed to produce the same effect upon the screen. It is built, as stage plays of three acts may well be, upon one dominant situation—III, ("Crime Pursued by Vengeance"). The entire story is motivated by Jules' desire for vengeance and upon the slow but sure means he uses to take it. In the stage play, the dialogue was colorful and picturesque, and the tempo of the production was admirably suited to the development and maintenance of suspense. But on the screen the dramatic backbone was not sufficient for a long picture. In two or three reels, the same theme might have been worked out with excellent effect, but in five or six reels one tense situation is lost in a sequence of draggy and nonessential action. This is true of many stage plays, and again illustrates the necessity for photoplays that are created from the screen standpoint. Situation XIII, ("Enmity of Kinsmen"), is slightly suggested by the father's attitude towards the heroine, but this situation does not develop dramatically.

The photoplaywright should exercise a great deal of care in building his plots, to avoid such a shortage of plot material. In general, this danger is met with in light comedy dramas rather than in melodramas of this type, which sometimes suffer from a plethora of plot. If there are three vital, well-balanced situations in a story, it is almost sure to contain five reels of dramatic action. In considering the examples, however, we find that although there are three critical situations in strong photoplays, there are often many others suggested or used in part.

"The Wolf" may be considered as one of the best of many pictures dealing with the theme of vengeance in the locale of the Northwest and with a French-Canadian hero. The picturesque quality of such a hero has been the cause of many repetitions of this idea, and it should be avoided by all except those writers who know the country and the characters of it. Do not be led far afield in your quest for plot material; the man or woman next door is just as interesting, if you view them from an interesting angle, as any exotic character may be.

"A WOMAN IN GRAY."

(Serico Producing Corporation; serial in Fifteen Episodes; written by C. N. and A. M. Williamson; continuity by Walter R. Hall; directed by James Vincent.)

SYNOPSIS.

Wilfred Amory buys the old Amory residence, where he was born, at a tax sale. It has stood vacant since the murder of old Mrs. Haynes within its walls. Through evidence given by Mary Edwards, servant, Florence Haynes, an adopted daughter, was convicted of the crime and died in prison. Amory sends his secretary, Tom Thurston, to inspect the property. Tom meets Ruth Hope, a girl dressed in gray, in the old house. She tells him, laughing, that she is also inspecting, but does not explain how she got in without a key. Amory and his niece arrive. The former is convinced that his father left concealed treasure in the house and this belief is strengthened by the discovery of a code paper in an old family Bible. Haviland-Hunter, a man of mystery, also gains access to the house by a secret passage. He is intent on finding the code, kidnaps Ruth and carries her off in an auto. Thurston pursues and rescues her. Ruth constantly wears a bracelet of old design, which covers

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the back of her right hand. Amory, who knows her as the author of a novel with the title, "A Woman in Gray," suspects that she has a strong interest in the code and its key, which is contained in another document. He wonders whether she is the Mary Edwards on whose testimony Mrs. Hayne's daughter was convicted. Amory's niece, Paula Wynne, is jealous of Ruth, with whom Tom has fallen in love. Haviland-Hunter and his henchmen make desperate efforts to do away with Ruth, and finally succeed in obtaining the code. But they are unable to decipher it, without Ruth's help. They decoy her to Hunter's den in the slums. She breaks away from her captors, just as Tom arrives. Escaping through a window, she swings herself across the intervening space on a clothes line. Hunter proceeds to cut the rope by which she is suspended in mid-air.

In the presentation of a consistent and well-constructed plot, this serial is above the average of serial productions. Its basic situations are "The Enigma," (XI), "Obtaining," (XII), and "Abduction," (X). The use of the first two of these three leads to a good element of mystery in the opening episodes, and "Abduction," as we have observed before, forms a very good basis for a thrilling and exciting sequence of events.

The use of the mysterious code as the object of the conflict is an idea that is employed rather frequently, and it is a variation of the familiar melodrama quest for the "papers." In this story there is more logic in the development of the idea than usually, for it is fairly plausible that a treasure might be buried in the estate and that the code of plans leading to it might be somewhere concealed. Many writers of serials concentrate so entirely upon developing the thrills that end each episode that they fail entirely in working out a consistent and plausible plot. It is an indication of the improved production conditions that the recent serials are more logical, more effective, and no less dramatic and sensational, than those of the past. All branches of the photoplay are advancing in quality, and the day is not far distant when the serial productions will be founded upon sound, plausible, human stories of as high a quality as the magazine serials. Photoplaywrights interested in the writing of serials, which has always been a remunerative field, should make a very careful study of the situations most often used and of the technique of mystery. There will be a very strong market for really good stories of this kind in the near future, for thrilling melodrama—with its direct appeal to the dramatic instincts—will always have a wide audience.

"TWENTY-THREE AND A HALF HOURS' LEAVE."

(Thomas H. Ince production; starring Douglas McLean and Doris May; adapted from the story of Mary Roberts Rinehart, by Agnes Johnston.)

SYNOPSIS.

Sergeant William Gray, in an American training camp, has a knack of getting into trouble by irresponsible breaches of army discipline. High spirits, rollicking humor, reckless daredeviltry and a habit of smashing army regulations to smithereens impede his career.

It is particularly unfortunate that these outbreaks seem always to be timed for the most important occasions. For instance, a stray dog that Gray has taken to his heart and bunk, bites the commanding officer on the leg when that severe disciplinarian is inspecting Gray's squad. Gray falls into disrepute. He makes a bet with the mess sergeant that in spite of this unhappy episode, he will conquer the objections of the general and be invited to breakfast with him. The general has a daughter, Peggy, whose lightest word is his law.

It happens that Gray and Peggy meet, and it is a case of love at first sight. As a reward for the strenuous exertions of the recruits, Gray's company is given twenty-three and a half hours' leave. Gray has arranged that Peggy shall call for him in her machine and a pleasant day's motoring through the country is anticipated.

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In order to deepen the impression he has already made, Gray arrays himself in a brand new uniform that he has ordered from his own tailor. This is clearly an infraction of the army rules and the inspector orders Gray to doff the new uniform. Seeing that the other members of the squad are not properly garbed, he orders them to take off their uniforms and wait until a consignment of new outfits arrives at the barracks.

The inspector's order for the supplies goes astray and the men, deprived of their leave, are left shivering in their B. V. D.'s. As Gray has a reputation for being a practical joker, his company swear vengeance against him. To add to his perplexities, Peggy is waiting for him, and, driven to desperation, he makes a daring escape through a window clad in a long ulster.

In the course of the day, which furthers Gray's love affair, Peggy and Gray manage to run to earth a German spy and his accomplice posing as photographers. This is a great feather in Gray's cap. Although he is due for a term of confinement in the barrack prison, he cheerfully submits to the sentence, because the general, pleased at his discovery of the spy, invites him to breakfast, where he partakes of the famous bran muffins, wins his bet and sees removed all obstacles to his courtship of Peggy.

This picture exemplifies the finest type of comedy drama. The humor depends not upon incidents (as in the case of most straight comedy and farce), but upon situations—situations which are refreshingly novel. The love interest brings in a note of seriousness, which furnishes excellent contrast with the lighter elements of the story.

Having a timely appeal, the story deals with soldier boys, but not with war. It makes use of the boisterous, good-natured camaraderie of American camp life, with its little comedies and its little tragedies. It draws the khaki-clad youths with sympathetic, faithful strokes, so that the fun-loving, warm-hearted Gray, the facetious mess sergeant, and their fellows are *real persons*. Even the scrubby little dog, who so inadvertently makes the general feel his personality, adds to the reality of this portrait of barrack life.

The first situation of note is a mirth-provoking application of VII ("Falling Prey to Cruelty or Misfortune"), when the squad find themselves unable to enjoy a rare holiday because they are without uniforms. Gray's hazardous escape and his boldness in appearing for his ride with Peggy, garbed in an ulster, is a humorous twist of situation IX ("Daring Enterprise"), which is also used later in the "detective" work of the two young patriots. The use of XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") gives rise to moderate suspense in the beginning. A modified, comedic form of X ("Abduction"), motivates the capture of the German spy.

The danger that the average student runs in writing comedy is that of *forcing* laughs. Characters are *dragged into* predicaments, and these predicaments are often patently artificial. A natural, logical development of situation from situation is just as necessary in comedy as in drama. The humor should arise spontaneously, depending upon the integral construction of the plot, not upon *extraneous* incidents or actions. To have characters do amusing things, and laugh at each other is not enough. The situations must contain fun which will appeal to an audience. This is far more difficult to achieve.

A thorough-going analysis of the situations in "Twenty-three and a Half Hours' Leave" should help the student to a working knowledge of the best methods of obtaining satisfying comedic effects. Each alignment of character and event should be taken to pieces and scrutinized, in parts, and as a whole, in somewhat the following manner. Selecting at random the line of action where the dog snaps and the General's horse shies—it is found that this has been built up upon the excellent characterization of Gray, of the General, and of the dog. The relationships between them have been carefully established. The audience is aware of Gray's painful proclivities for getting into trouble. It also knows the General's severity. The moment chosen is a crucial

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one—the general is inspecting the squad. The cur and the horse are the chief actors. The climactic incident occurs suddenly, unexpectedly. Consequently, it is greeted with laughter.

Comedy is by no means easy to write. It deserves painstaking study. This picture may be considered a splendid model, having not only sound construction, but also a sequence of situations that all possess genuine humor.

"DISRAELI."

(United Artists production; starring George Arliss; adapted from Louis N. Parker's stage play, "Disraeli," by Forrest Halsey; directed by Henry Kolker.)

SYNOPSIS.

The efforts of Russia to prevent England from securing the Suez Canal, after Disraeli had arranged for its purchase from the Khedive of Egypt, is the leading motif of this picture. The Russian ambassador employs a Mrs. Noel Travers to watch the Prime Minister. When the spy learns that he has negotiated with a private banker named Meyers to furnish the money to pay for the canal, the woman helps to start a run on Meyers' bank. The cheque has been sent to the Khedive, and Meyers orders a shipment of gold from South America to be taken to Egypt and the deal closed. When this information reaches the Russian Government, it promptly has the ship scuttled at sea, and the Prime Minister faces disgrace. But his shrewdness shows him a way out of the difficulty. He sends for Sir Michael Probert, Governor of the Bank of England, who has opposed the scheme, and, by a clever but impossible threat, forces him to endorse the note. There is an appealing romance connected with the Viscount Deeford, the young emissary Disraeli sends to Egypt to arrange the purchase, and Lady Pevensy, daughter of the Duke of Glastonbury. At the ceremony held in honor of Disraeli's successful enterprise, his wife, who is very ill, but who knows his triumph will not be complete unless she is by his side, unexpectedly appears, and together they approach the throne of their Queen, who is to be crowned Empress of India, because of the far-sightedness and patriotism of her Prime Minister.

The long run made by George Arliss in the celebrated play, "Disraeli," is a high spot in modern stage history. The actor's embodiment of the famous Prime Minister of England, who carried the purchase of the Suez Canal to a successful conclusion, has received the stamp of universal approval. It is a deft and arresting piece of character drawing, the many-sided Disraeli being brought back to life with startling skill. Mr. Arliss has transferred this fascinating personality to the screen without the loss of any of its previous power. The screen version holds closely to the original and presents a moving picture that has intellectual depth, a fine grade of humor and strong human interest. It is entertaining from start to finish, giving a series of accurate scenes from the life and times of Queen Victoria.

Aside from its historical significance, it is valuable on account of its splendid dramatic construction. There is, throughout, a clearly-defined, sustained element of conflict: in the abstract, the conflict between Russia and England over the Suez Canal purchase; in the concrete, the struggle between Disraeli and Mrs. Noel Travers, Russia's expert agent. This conflict increases in intensity up to the climax, where Disraeli, apparently defeated and at the end of his resources—facing utter disgrace and the blame of a whole nation—by a clever ruse, forces Probert to sign the paper giving Meyers unlimited credit, and thus saves the entire undertaking from bitter failure.

The motivating situation is IX ("Daring Enterprise") which forms the groundwork for the bulk of the action. XX ("Self-sacrifice for an Ideal") actuates Disraeli's enterprise; XXIV ("Rivalry of Superior and Inferior") explains the relationship between the Prime Minister and Mrs. Travers. XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") is the initial situation in the love affair of Clarissa and Deeford, used in combination with XXXII ("Mistaken Jealousy"), XXXIII ("Erroneous Judgment") and XXXIV ("Remorse"). The machinations of the Russian spy are based upon XI ("The Enigma").

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The strength of the story lies chiefly in the characterization of the lead, Disraeli. All the various phases of his multiple personality are given full play: his tender, devoted comradeship with his wife; the playful whimsicality in his relationship with the impetuous young Clarissa, whose "hero" he is; his generosity toward the blundering Deeford; his understanding friendship with Meyers; his wily subtlety in outwitting Mrs. Travers—to mention only the principal ones. He is a man who can dictate broad, national policies, and yet not lose sight of the gracious, little intimacies of life, such as the bouquet which he presents to his wife every morning.

The other characterizations are good, though of course far less complicated.

It is indeed worthwhile, when a writer can build an authentic historical plot such as this, about some impressive figure. History is a splendid source for the student who knows how to use it. The historical story must do more, much more, than lift facts from the records, and weave them into a plot. It must *illuminate* historical content; it must, from sometimes meagre data, reconstruct personalities, and make them live, move and have their being in the proper environment. It must see history with the eyes of the "teller of tales," who looks beyond the political and economic superficialities that surround his characters into their very souls.

"DON'T CALL ME LITTLE GIRL."

(Realart production; starring Mary Miles Minter; adapted from Catherine Chisholm Cushing's play, "Jerry," by Edith Kennedy; directed by Joseph Henebery.)

SYNOPSIS.

The story is centered in the personality of an ultra-modern girl, Jerry, who defies her mother and her various relatives, and detests being called "little girl." She is due at the station from school. Her mother goes down to meet her and is shocked at her modern style of dress. To provoke her, Jerry steals a certain young man's auto and goes for a spin. When the youth recovers the car, he finds himself falling in love. Jerry discovers that he is engaged to her old-fashioned aunt, and becomes determined to win him for a husband. She outwits her aunt, and makes amends by intriguing a meek admirer into matrimony with the spinster.

While there is very little substance to this plot, there is enough pleasing incident to keep it moving. A great deal depends upon the ingenuity and enthusiasm with which the star interprets her part, in this type of light comedy drama. The task of the director is also highly important, for he must make up for lack of dramatic complications by keeping the action swift and entertaining. Without having been tested as a stage play and thereby having gained a reputation, it is doubtful whether so slender a plot would find favor with the producer.

The construction depends primarily upon a humorous application of situation VIII ("Revolt"). There are certain subtly comedic uses of IX ("Daring Enterprise"). XIV ("Rivalry of Kinsmen") enters into the relationship of Jerry and her aunt. XXVIII ("Obstacles to Love") is one of the direct, contributing pieces of motivation for the premise of the story—Jerry's determination to "show them" that she is grown up.

The light, frivolous tempo of the action is permissible in the airy "sub-deb" story, such as this. The picture offers wholesome entertainment, and is one which boys and girls of the same age as "Jerry" will thoroughly enjoy.

PART FOUR.

PHOTOPLAY PLOT ENCYCLOPEDIA

CHAPTER XII.

THE PHOTOPLAY OF THE FUTURE.

1. The way of the prophet is beset by pitfalls, but perhaps a word may be allowed concerning the probable developments of the photoplay during the next few years. During the relatively short period of photoplay history the new art of presenting fiction by means of pictured action has made surprising advances. The motion picture is no longer held in contempt by those of the literary and art world, but it has in fact recruited many of its early detractors as directors and writers and producers. Many experiments have been tried, many failures must be recorded, but in the various cycles of development there has been a continual progress towards a form of art that at its best is comparable to the best of the stage and of printed fiction.

POPULAR DEMAND.

2. The candid and unbiased observer will admit that the screen, on the whole, provides as intelligent and interesting entertainment as the stage or the popular magazines. The necessity for making an appeal to a wide and indiscriminate audience limits all of these forms of popular entertainment, and the artistic merit of the productions can only be judged from the popular standpoint. The producers and exhibitors of photoplays make a very serious effort to discover what the public likes and to provide such productions, and it is gratifying to know that the photoplays that have been considered best by all the critics have made the deepest popular appeal.

THE ELIMINATION OF ARTIFICIALITY.

3. The first thing that we can say of the photoplay of the future, then, is that it will be of a higher dramatic standard than in the past. There will be less artificiality of plot, less absurdity of theme, less mechanical manufacture of structure.

Instead, the plays will be of the substance of life, dramatically constructed of course, but founded upon real situations of real significance to the average spectator. The producers are recognizing the need for plays that truly reflect and interpret life, and such photoplays are easily salable if they also possess genuine dramatic value. But the writers who have written for the screen in the past, the authors of stage plays and novels whose work has been adapted, and the inexperienced photoplaywrights do not seem to recognize the same necessity. If we can only impress upon students the necessity of taking the photoplay seriously as an art form of writing real stories of real life, of dealing with themes of genuine significance to the average theatre-goer, we shall have accomplished the chief purpose of this book.

DEVELOPMENT OF THEME AND CHARACTERIZATION.

4. In the future, photoplaywrights will be more concerned with theme and with characterization than in the past. There will be more genuine creative thought in the building of photoplays, and the photoplaywright will work more slowly and carefully, making each play the very best of which he is capable.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PHOTODRAMATIST.

5. A thorough, careful study of the photoplays of the past and their success with the public, as well as the views of the best-known editors and directors in the industry, lead us to believe that henceforth the trained photoplaywright will have a better market, larger returns and more enduring rewards than ever before. To the thoughtful, creative writer who can master the new technique of the screen, the photoplay offers better opportunities than the stage or the magazines.

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6. We would urge the student to keep closely in touch with the constant changes that are taking place, and to become familiar with the needs and requirements of the various stars and producers. It is necessary for any writer to study his market very carefully and to know what to write and where to sell it.

PHOTOPLAY PLOT ENCYCLOPEDIA

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION: GENERAL ADVICE IN REGARD TO THE WRITING OF PHOTOPLAYS.

1. After a careful study of the foregoing pages of this book the student will have a clear knowledge of the thirty-six dramatic situations and the combinations which are possible. Enough has been said in the specific treatment of each situation and example to clarify many of the problems confronting the novice. The reader should now possess a critical standard by which he may analyze and judge the value of all photoplays he views.

2. Having made use of the book as we have indicated, the writer should then take up his script and work out the complete plot outline. When it is finished—and here we would again remind the student that the trained photoplaywright spends more time in constructing than in actual writing—the book may again be used. Compare it with the example that is most nearly like it, and subject it to the most careful criticism of which you are capable.

3. After several revisions of the plot outline, the best plan is to lay it aside for a while. Writers often allow themselves to believe their work is very good when a

little cool analysis after the first fine flush of creation has passed would illuminate many weaknesses. Only after you have clearly visualized and analyzed the complete plot outline should you begin to write the synopsis. The detailed synopsis, of course, should be the clearest, most concise and comprehensive you can possibly write, for from it the editor must grasp your whole story.

The Plot Encyclopedia is a book of reference and should be used as such, but certainly to the thoughtful student it is also a book of instruction. By a comparative and analytic study of the thirty-six situations and of the plays synopsisized and analyzed, he should arrive at a clear idea of what makes for dramatic value in plot and theme and character development.

Reflect life in your plots, real people in your characters and leave always in the mind some principle of truth driven home by your theme.

"Be an artist and entertain your audience; be to some extent a teacher and leave with them some abiding principle of truth or of life."

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